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ABSTRACT

This training manual contains background information about the 1988 General Educational Development (GED) test, ideas for teaching and assessing writing to prepare students for the test, and samples of classroom materials teachers can use. Sections include information on the following: the writing process; student writing; managing the instructional program; the essay; evaluation writing; holistic scoring; and test-taking strategies. A case study provides two drafts of an essay and analysis of it. Appendixes to the guide contain a list of suggested writing topics, review checklists, and an annotated bibliography of 50 items in the following categories: adult education/GED, evaluation, peer response, writing process, research, classroom applications, texts/workbooks, and writing forms. References and an information source complete the guide. (KC)

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THE GED WRITING SKILLS TEST ESSAY

TEACHER

TRAINING MANUAL

Written and compiled by
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in cooperation with

The Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services,
Division of Adult and Community Education

and

The Adult Education Staff Development Project,
University of Maine

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Planning the inservice program began in November, 1986. Since then many people have been involved in the production of this manual as advisors, reviewers, and supporters.

Duke Martin and Clayton Blood offered me the chance to write the manual and participate in designing and implementing the training series.

Colleagues and friends took time to review the draft manual, and their comments helped me see differently and write a better product:

Anne Kemper
Rita Labarbera
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Students allowed me to use their writing. Their writing was, perhaps, the single greatest source of inspiration.

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Lucinda H. Coombs
Project Consultant

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PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

Maine's GED programs serve approximately 3,000 adults a year. Some GED candidates drop in and take the test the same week. Some complete a preparation course to refresh their memories and sharpen their skills. Some work individually; some learn in classes of up to 20 students. Some programs have experienced teachers. Other programs have greater turnover and need more extensive training for their staffs. This manual doesn't have all the answers for every teacher in every situation. Rather, it will guide you as you work with your students, and you will find ways to adapt its contents to individuals.

This training manual was written to supplement the training series designed by the Division of Adult and Community Education of the Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services and the Adult Education Staff Development Project at the University of Maine. In it are background information about the 1988 GED test, ideas for teaching and assessing writing to prepare students for the test, and samples of classroom materials for you to use. Of particular interest is an extensive annotated bibliography of writing references. This will give you answers, and perhaps further questions, about the writing process and the teaching of writing. It will also be a source of comfort, for it contains writing by people who write and teach writing and who share many of your anxieties, frustrations, joys and triumphs. I invite you to share some of your successes and your questions to update the manual over the next few years.

INTRODUCTION

In this section you will find:

An overview of the essay portion of the 1988 GED test

How you can help prepare students for the essay test, including:

—administering the pre-test

—your role

—establishing a writing atmosphere

—when and how to introduce writing to the class

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE GED WRITING SKILLS TEST ESSAY

The GED writing skills test is the most striking change in the GED test for 1988. In February 1984, the Language Arts panel of the GED Test Specifications Committee recommended that writing be measured directly, in the essay portion, and indirectly, in the multiple choice portion. Over 75 years of educational research demonstrates that there is very little carryover from grammar instruction and skill drills to success in composition. The panel suggested that "candidates be asked to compose an expository writing sample, generally of the type requiring the writer to take a position and defend it with appropriate evidence, detail and argumental strategies."

Examinees will be given an essay topic about which all adults should have some general knowledge and must respond by stating a view or opinion and explaining it. The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) will distribute the topics, and all those taking the test at the same time will write on the same topic. Topics will be brief, identifying an issue and asking a question about it. No specialized knowledge is required. Examinees will have 45 minutes to write an essay of approximately 200 words in a special booklet. Scrap paper will be provided for planning and organizing the answer.

HOW IS THE TEST SCORED?

The essay will be scored by highly trained readers who will use a six-point holistic scoring scale. The essay will be read independently by two readers, and if there is a difference of more than one point, a third reader will read that piece. The readers will judge each essay on its overall effectiveness, rather than by identifying errors, as analytic scoring methods do. The readers will consider: purpose, content, organization, support, and the conventions of standard written English. A more complete discussion of the scoring method follows in Section G.

WHY AN ESSAY TEST?

The inclusion of this type of test in the GED reflects a growing awareness of the need for literacy. We live in a literate society, a multi-cultural democracy that demands that we attain a certain level of competence in language. Many states require writing competency tests of high school graduates; the GED Testing Service has recognized the need to restructure the GED test so that it "more closely reflect[s] high school curricula". The present GED Writing Skills test examines a student's ability to edit, rather than compose. Editing skills will still be measured in the multiple choice section of the writing skills test. Teaching for the new writing skills essay test will help students develop the ability to write effectively, a valuable skill in our world.

HOW DO I ADMINISTER THE PRE-TEST?

Generally, the GED pre-test is given when the individual first contacts the GED program, but writing an essay requires greater confidence and a different set of skills than answering multiple choice questions. It is important to assess the candidate's anxiety about writing before offering the writing sample pre-test. You may choose to give it first, if the student likes writing and does well, or simply because the student wants to "get it over with".

You may decide to give other sections of the pre-test first; if the student does well, offer the writing sample. The student's initial success may be enough to allay any fears he or she has about writing. You may determine that it's in the student's best interest to wait a few days to allow him/her to ease into a writing atmosphere.

Whenever you give the test, be sure that you score the essay immediately. If the score is unsatisfactory, be ready with some general suggestions for improvement. For example, you might tell the student that the essay was thorough but would be scored higher if he/she narrowed the topic and organized it more logically for someone who might read it. Be sure to communicate that both would be easier to do with just a little bit of instruction. If the essay is in need of greater revision, urge the student to enroll in a preparation course. The candidate must see a clear way to earning a GED certificate. An understanding of the holistic scoring scale is all you need to do this.

You may find that some students need more specialized instruction, or may require particular testing accommodations to successfully complete the writing portion of the GED. These may include: students with first language interference; learning disabled students; hearing impaired students; students who have limited basic language skills. Consult your program director about ways to assist him/her.

WHAT DOES A WRITING TEACHER DO?

To teach writing well, a teacher must be a coach, an advocate, someone who values the students' efforts and can provide adequate support and information in order to:

1. **help students adequately prepare an essay**
2. **teach students to construct a 200 word essay in 45 minutes**
3. **help students acquire the ability to review and revise independently**
4. **to help students combine the rules of standard written English with effective writing techniques**
5. **help students become "test-wise" for the essay exam**

HOW CAN I MAKE WRITING PART OF A GED CLASS?

The classroom atmosphere must be conducive to creating. The teacher is the single most important ingredient in establishing such an atmosphere, but the space is important as well.

It should be well-lit, with room to write and talk about writing.

There should be enough space to do small group work, such as peer review and class activities.

There should be a chalkboard large enough to do brainstorming, clustering, making tree diagrams and other large group work. (Be sure to bring chalk — that seems to be a precious commodity in many public schools.)

Have dictionaries and other reference books available. If you plan to use workbooks, have them in the room with you.

Have a variety of writing implements available — pens of different colors, types and textures, pencils, even crayons. Students may forget to bring something to write with; odd pens and pencils help free up ideas. Show students how to use different colors to revise and edit.

The same goes for paper — from index cards to newsprint. Writing in a ring binder limits what writers can do. Encourage students to use a different kind of notebook or paper.

If you have a room that you can decorate, put up posters to remind students of test-taking or writing techniques that you find particularly useful.

Bring in sensory stimuli — pictures, objects, foods, music — whatever might help your students write more.

The setting in which writing instruction takes place should make writing easy. Remove the barriers, add stimulation. Small changes often make the difference.

WHEN DO I START TEACHING WRITING—AND HOW DO I DO IT?

Start soon. But remember that some students will be intimidated, even frightened by the prospect of writing immediately, especially if that writing is to be shared. As you work with your class, you'll be able to tell who is ready, and who is not. They will all have to be ready, sooner or later, but you cannot have a positive influence unless the student is receptive.

From the moment of intake, you can begin to make some assessment of the student's attitudes about writing. As the student completes the intake form, watch for handwriting and errors in mechanics.

Observe all students as they write when they first join the class or tutorial. Does the student:

—shuffle his/her feet?
—hunch protectively over the paper?
—grip the pencil in white-knuckled fingers?
—hesitate to put pencil to paper?
—stare out the window?
—glance nervously at the other students?

If so, your first task is to alleviate the anxiety imposed by the writing assignment. For further information, see Section B, page 13.

When the student gives you that initial piece of writing, tuck it away and move on with the classwork.

Review it privately, unless the student is interested in immediate feedback.

You can assess the student's writing ability on the sentence level, looking not just for errors, but for strengths.

Consider also whether you feel that the student is addressing a reader or just a blank piece of paper, and whether the student is able to convey information clearly and completely.

WRITING PROCESS

In this section you will find:

An overview of the writing process

A discussion about writing anxiety, including:

- what it is,
- how you can recognize it, and
- what you can help the writer do about it

Prewriting strategies

Drafting strategies

Revising and Editing Strategies

How to teach about surface errors (mechanics)

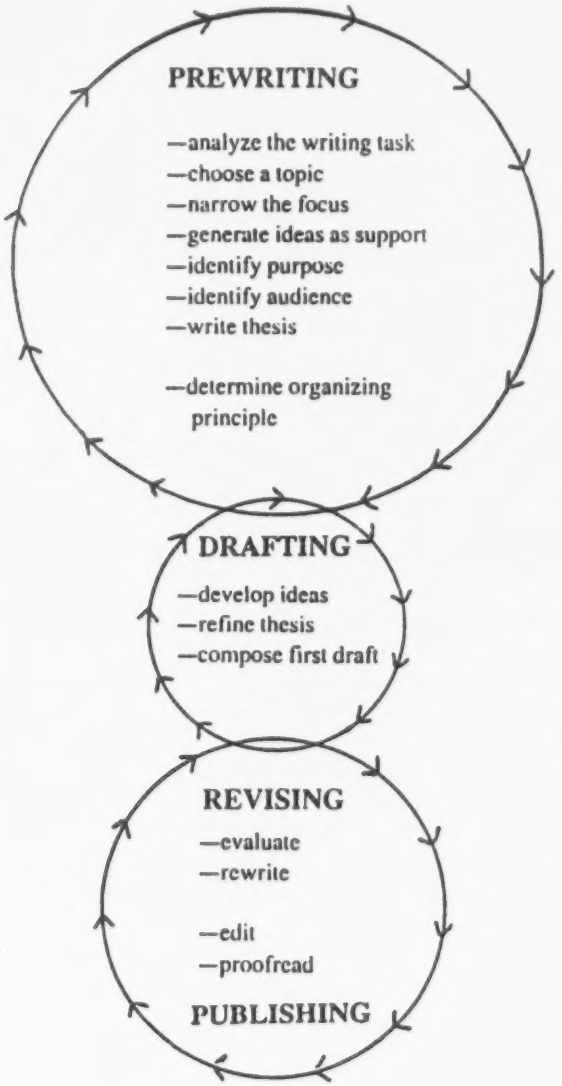
WRITING PROCESS

OVERVIEW

All writing is the creative process of making decisions. It is not merely amassing a set of skills; it is learning to make meaning, to communicate to different audiences for different reasons. If there is a secret to writing well, it is in thinking clearly. If the writer doesn't know the subject, or have a firm view of that subject, the writing will be muddy. If the writer hasn't read thoroughly or understood the reading, the resulting writing will not be clear. Effective writing is clear thinking.

The writing process approach to teaching writing is intended to focus less on the writing than on the writer. A teacher who employs the process approach puts more energy into helping the writer change than into changing the writing itself. The writer understands his or her own writing process and approaches it differently. The difference is generally a more constructive method that results in a better product.

The **process of writing** is roughly divided into three task groups: **prewriting**, **drafting** and **revising**. Within those three groups are a number of smaller steps. The following diagram illustrates the writing process and its cyclical nature.



The **prewriting stage** is too often minimized or overlooked altogether. This is the point at which we as writers give ourselves a good start. We figure out what we have to do. We make plans for ourselves, jotting down ideas and questions, taking time to explore what we know about the topic. Prewriting involves two-steps: generating ideas and organizing them.

A poorly organized paper may have been written by someone who wrote prematurely. A paper that is written completely off the topic was written by a writer who didn't read the writing prompt carefully, or understand the directions. In New York state's annual writing competency testing, these two problems — organization and task analysis — presented the most difficulty to writers. Time spent before the paper is written not only makes for a better paper, it saves the writer time.

The **drafting stage** is when we see what we think. We get everything on paper. We've thought, focused, planned; we have an overall picture of the paper we want to end up with. It is a whole, but it is not perfect.

We perfect it in the **revising stage.** We identify not only the weakness, but strengths that we want to capitalize on. We check for logical flow and organization, quality of our support material, the clarity and follow-through of the paper's focus. We rework and polish as we need to. One of the most difficult jobs that writers have is that of seeing their work as others see it, divorcing themselves from the product to view the writing critically, to communicate effectively with their audience. This is when writers need readers. Not to correct, but to respond.

The **final stage** is **proofreading** and **publishing.** Proofreading is the final check for typos, misspellings and minor errors. Publishing is the production of a final piece of writing, when the writer feels that it is ready for the intended audience. In the GED essay test, the writer "publishes" at the end of the 45 minute test period.

As the diagram illustrates, the major task groups are not distinct, but overlapping. Writing does not result from completing a series of tasks in a set order. Writers repeat certain steps, sometimes revising the paper as many as 14-15 times. Each writer has a unique process; what works for one will not necessarily work for another. We see different steps as easier than others and we begin at different points in the cycle.

It is essential that teachers of writing know how students write, in order to help them work toward a more constructive way of writing. That is why teachers of writing should write themselves. It doesn't matter what you write. Writing of any sort keeps us in touch with the decisions writers make and the obstacles writers encounter. It is also important for teachers to write with students, to model techniques and behaviors that will nurture developing writers.

The focus of writing instruction, then, is to help students identify their own process, working through it with them, enabling them to function independently of a teacher. We must help students see themselves as writers, as individuals empowered with the ability to communicate. We are all listeners, we are all speakers, we are all readers. It follows that we can all be writers. The challenge is to find our way through the maze — to help students discover how they write and what works best for them. We have succeeded if our students don't need us anymore.

WRITING ANXIETY

Writing causes anxiety to different degrees in many writers, experienced and inexperienced alike. Such anxiety has many causes. Among them are:

1. low self-esteem
2. little or no success in writing
3. little or no writing experience
4. misconceptions about writing ("it should be perfect"; "it should be easy")
5. unrealistic expectations about writing (the compulsion to say something new and exciting)
6. a generally anxious personality
7. a preoccupation with grammar rules, which may or may not be correct ("never begin a sentence with a conjunction")
8. a reluctance to share writing

In some cases, writing anxiety can constrain or even paralyze a writer. Some signs of a blocked writer are:

1. physical tension, evidenced by handwriting and body language
2. repeated false starts due to premature editing or censoring
3. avoidance of writing ("procrastination")
4. a full confession ("I just can't seem to put anything on paper".)

The writer has to do the actual writing, but you can help by being patient, understanding, supportive, and laudatory about what is written or thought. It's sometimes helpful to describe your own composing behavior and related anxiety. Discuss how you tackle a writing assignment and what conditions have to exist before you can produce. Sometimes writers have quite peculiar requirements. For example, Hemingway wrote standing up. Help blocked writers discover what might unlock the words. Getting the first word on paper often works. Prewriting techniques (freewriting, clustering, brainstorming) or private writing (keeping a journal) are useful. Another method is for a blocked writer to reward him/herself after a certain amount is accomplished. (Chocolate chip cookies, anyone?)

PREWRITING

GED candidates will have time to prewrite, and they'll need to. All writers do. They must analyze the task: read the topic carefully, select and focus their answer, and plan the structure of their essay. Spending a few minutes to plan may make the difference between a 3 and a 5 paper. Considerations in the prewriting stage are:

—**writing anxiety,** related to essay exam writing, writing in general or overall performance. Some of this stems from past failures, from a need to perfect, or it may be from lingering misconceptions about writing. See the discussion on writing anxiety, above.

—**task analysis,** which may be comprised by careless reading, anxiety about time, lack of understanding of terms used in the topic. No matter how well-constructed the answer, if it doesn't address the topic, it will not receive an acceptable score.

—**selecting a response** which the writer can discuss in 200 words.

—**generating support material** — the details and examples that develop the main idea.

—**identifying the purpose** of the student's response. This is somewhat different from knowing what the question asks. The writer needs to know what he/she wants to accomplish. What should the reader know at the end of the essay?

—**determining a method of organizing** the answer. At test time, the candidate should be familiar with a variety of organizing schemes.

—**identifying the audience.** It is always easier to write to somebody in particular, rather than to an anonymous examiner or a blank piece of paper. For purposes of the GED, it may be more helpful for the examinee to write to a peer, to visualize a real person. This allows the writer to preceive the needs of a reader and reduces the anxiety that comes with writing to an "expert".

—**writing a thesis statement,** which encapsulates the essay, focuses the writing, and remains a constant guide for the writer throughout the testing period.

PREWRITING STRATEGIES

1. To analyze the writing task:

Practice reading directions with your students. Make sure that students understand all the words in the question. For example, "compare" means "to find the similarities" and "contrast" means "to find the differences". Some students won't know that. See section H for a guide to understanding essay questions.

Rephrase the topic as a sentence to complete, such as "the positive effects of the automobile on daily life are . . ." Recheck the topic to be sure that the sentence follows. This could then be written as the thesis statement.

It is sometimes helpful for the student to outline the question to divide it into more manageable units. For example, again from the GED Preview:

1) automobile resp. for changes in U.S. some better, some worse;
2) write 200 words;
3) describe effect of auto on life (+, −, or both).

You can do this a couple of times on the board to illustrate.

2. Freewriting:

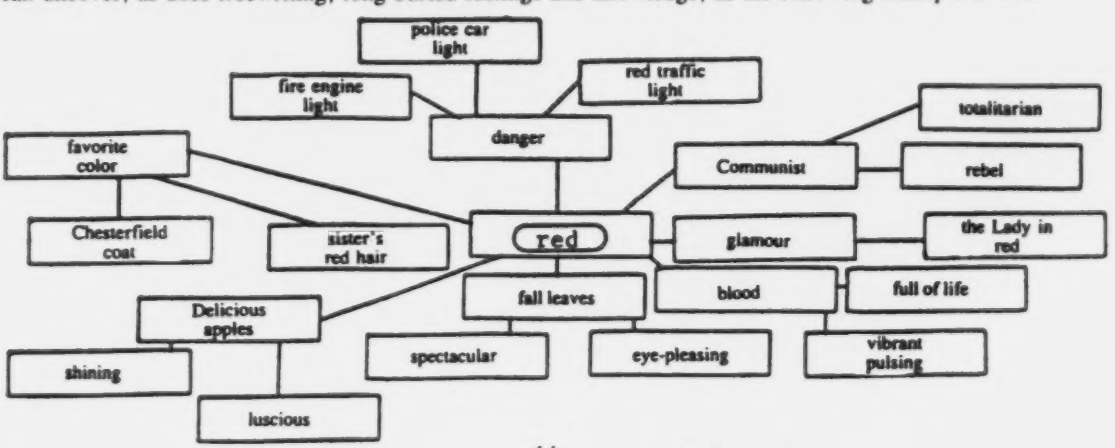
Freewriting is spontaneous, unstructured and uninterrupted writing that is designed to warm up a writer, help identify an interest, clarify an opinion. Its purpose is to get ideas out of the mind and onto the paper. For a short time (which can vary from 3-5 minutes to 20 minutes) the writer writes without stopping — thinking and writing, not correcting. The result may look like a paragraph, but read like a list. Its value is that the writer is not constrained by mechanical accuracy, but can access thoughts, feelings or knowledge that seemed to be locked forever in the writer's mind. Freewriting also serves to release tension by using the hands and focusing the mind. It does not matter what the freewriting contains; what matters is what it does for the writer. An example:

> I don't know what to write. what a stupid assignment. let's see. I could be at home right now. I have so much work to do. It's hard being a mother, working and going to school, but I have to. no choice. I'd like to be home, resting, seeing the kids, but here I am writing about nothing. it's nice, though, doing this for myself. i haven't done anything for myself in a long time. Too long. When was the last time? I can't even remember. I can't think of anything. Oh well, it doesn't really mater. I wonder where I'll be in five years. I'll have my diploma, I'll have a job — what job. not the one I have now. who wants to pump gas forever. Maybe I'll go to UMA. Hey — that's an idea. I've never thought of that before, but I guess I could do it. If I can do all I'm doing now, I guess I could do that. I'll have to check it out. Maybe I'll talk to some people here about that.

This is a great way to focus attention on the class, helping your students to leave their kids and job behind; as a way to "warm-up"—physically and mentally as well as emotionally. Free writing can be guided; it can be random; it can be on a single topic of the student's choosing. It should always be private — not looked at by the teacher, and certainly never graded. If the student wants to share this, fine, but mandatory sharing takes the "free" out of freewriting.

3. Clustering:

Clustering begins with a nucleus word and the writer associates words and ideas with that. It helps identify a topic, narrow a focus, generate support material. It can show how ideas are related. It can spark suggestions for organization. It can uncover, as does freewriting, long buried feelings and knowledge, as the following example shows:



Here is the memory which resulted from the clustering:

Red is my second favorite color. It might be my very favorite, except that it recalls the beautiful long red curls that belonged, not to me, but to the sister who was just two years younger. My daddy called her his "sports model girl." (My Dad sold cars.) I suppose that my straight brown hair, with a bowl haircut, and bangs that were always in my eyes, qualified me as his "tin Lizzy." Actually, Dad called me his "ugly duckling." Anyway, other reds have managed to soften that memory. My brown hair allowed me to *wear* red, while my sister could not. Red maple leaves, red zinnias, red sunsets, red apples, red blood, vibrant and pulsing-well, to paraphrase the poet — "my heart leaps up when I behold red." The first coat I bought for myself was a bittersweet red Chesterfield with a black velvet collar, and quilted black lining. I set a little red heart-shaped hat on my head and enjoyed seeing the heads turn to watch *me* this time — not my red-headed kid sister.

4. Brainstorming:

This is the listing of all words, phrases, ideas that are related to a central theme, or topic. Don't edit anything at this stage. Put down whatever comes to mind. All ideas are relevant until you begin to focus and limit and organize your material. This is sometimes called free listing. Brainstorm with your students to illustrate the method.

Ordered listing is a second type of brainstorming. Ordered listing helps writers identify a focus, generate support material, and classify and organize details. It is particularly helpful for test-taking, since it is a quick and easy way to move the writer from the prompt to the essay with a list on concrete details.

5. Conferencing:

Writers can confer with each other as well as the teacher to identify a direction for their writing. Peer conferences allow students to share ideas, ask questions, discuss different treatments of the same writing task. If five students discuss that same assignment, you'll get five different essays. The important point is to help students see how to approach the writing. For more information about peer review, see Section F, page 44.

Teacher conferences are a bit different. The teacher must guide, not direct. Asking the right questions and being supportive is the best help you can offer. For more information about teacher-student conferences, see Section F, page 41.

6. Organizing:

There are many ways to organize a paper and each writer may organize the same material a different way. The organizing principle that the writer chooses must make sense to both the writer and reader. The writer's thought process should be clear, transitions between paragraphs and ideas logical and readily apparent.

Many of the sources in the bibliography suggest organizing principles. Some of those suggestions are: general to specific, specific to general, most important to least important — or the other way around, relate cause and effect, order of time, space or events leading to a climax (depending on the subject).

Techniques to organize the material generated in prewriting activities include: formal outlines, informal lists, numbering of brainstorming or clustering responses, drawing diagrams (ranging from flow charts and tree diagrams to sketches and pictures). For students who have difficulty categorizing, try this:

1. The writer jots down on separate pieces of paper or notecards each separate idea or supporting detail.
2. You and the student together sort the cards into piles.
3. Label each pile, and use those labels for subject headings in the essay.

A variation of this is to have the student label pieces of paper with subject headings. On each piece of paper list only those details that relate to the heading. Order the lists on each paper.

Keep checking for relevance of supporting ideas using the revising model on page 17, Section B.

DRAFTING

The purpose of this stage is for the writer simply to get down on paper the results of the prewriting activities. Some writers use drafting as a way to discover what they know, writing what's sometimes called a "discovery draft". Caution students not to edit prematurely, but to record, as accurately as possible, the thought process. Some suggestions for writers at this stage are:

1. Write on only one side of the paper, and on every other line, which makes revising easier.
2. If you can't think of the right word, leave a space for it or use the best substitute and mark it to correct later.
3. Make notations in the margins or over/under words and phrases that you are not sure about or may want to change.
4. Don't worry about correct punctuation or spelling unless it comes easily. You can correct it later.
5. Remember that every sentence doesn't have to be perfect in a draft. Get the main idea down and save the polishing for later.
6. Cross-out, don't erase. That's what you skipped lines for.

You can help students learn efficient drafting skills by modeling your work. Again, write with your students. Share your rough drafts with them. If they haven't written much, they may simply not know how to write a draft. Seeing your rough and then final draft will demonstrate the difference between the two.

REVISING

Revising requires several steps — first, the writer must **evaluate the draft.** What's good about it? What needs to be changed? Following that, the writer **reworks the essay** to reflect the answers to those questions. These steps may be repeated any number of times before the writer is satisfied. Then comes the **editing** step — polishing the prose, selecting the best words to express the meaning, writing smooth sentences. Finally, the writer **proofreads** for errors, and the essay is complete.

Evaluating the draft:

The writer must see the piece as a whole. Use the Qualities of Good Writing, Section C, page 23, the Essay Writing Guide on page 36, and the checklists in Appendix II to guide the review. Be sure the essay satisfies the holistic scoring criteria. Help the students learn the scale, so they can recall it during the test and use it to guide their writing.

A good tool for generating ideas and evaluating the overall essay follows. The writing guide based on this tool tells the student to:

1. select a support point for the thesis
2. write a topic sentence about it
3. locate key words in the sentence
4. ask questions about it
5. give examples in answer to the questions
6. comment

REPEAT THIS FOR EACH IDEA, THEN:

7. reevaluate the thesis — is it too broad? too restricted?
8. restate if necessary

Using sample essay E5 from the GED Preview, the student might write:

Thesis: Automobile has been a positive effects in many peoples life today.

Support point: good use for elderly.

Topic Sentence: Most of all about automobiles is a good use for elders people who can't get around.

Key words: automobile, good use, elders people, can't get around.

Ask questions: Why do they need it? What for? Why can't they get around?

Give examples: limited mobility — aging — arthritis, fear of falling, endurance, etc. Need to go to doctor, etc.

Comment: Some older people don't need to drive. But, what if they live alone and don't have relatives or neighbors close by? And some people have to go to the doctor's more when they're older. And in the winter, it's hard to get around, especially if you're afraid of getting hurt if you slip or fall.

Here, the student would go through the same process for the other support points in the draft. In this example, the writer has not followed through on the broad range of "many peoples", but has restricted the discussion to the elderly. By going through this exercise, the writer will easily see that the essay does not include well-developed examples, and must be revised to do that.

Reevaluate thesis: Seems very broad. But, I can still use it. I just have to be sure and give more examples so that I don't talk just about the elderly.

Restate? Not necessary.

Other suggestions for revising:

1. Show students how to revise, using carets (^), cut and paste, different colored pencils and pens, arrows, cross-outs. Don't assume that they'll know how to do this. Chances are, when they were in school, teachers emphasized neatness.

2. Conferences between students and with the teacher is always a help. Refer to Section F, page 39 for more on evaluation.

3. Reading aloud helps us hear the writing and may be the best way for writers to approximate what the writing sounds like to a reader. This is best done after the writing has "cooled" a bit, so that the writer sees it with fresh eyes/ears. "Cooling" is not possible during the test, but using it during the student's preparation can create an awareness of the reader's needs.

4. Students can more easily revise if they know what to look for. Have them think of revising as "moving language". They can insert or delete words or phrases or sentences; they can rearrange words or they can substitute words or phrases.

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH

There are many workbooks, handbooks, and grammar skill developers on the market. Here are some other suggestions:

1. Instruct in grammar and mechanics only when the student has a problem. You can easily identify such problems with the pre-test, Part I and by looking at writing samples.

2. Group students who consistently make similar sentence errors for group instruction and discussion.

3. Use a non-technical explanation — be creative. For example, instead of explaining English syntax, ask writers of run-ons to read the sentences aloud. When they pause, they should put in a period. It may not work all the time, but it will minimize the problem and make the writing readable.

4. Try sentence combining exercises to teach sentence variety and editing skills.

5. Use the student's own writing where possible. Move to exercises for Part I of the Writing Skills test to check application skills.

STUDENT WRITING

In this section you will find:

Samples of adult students' writing for use in training session

A list of the qualities of good writing

A list of commonly encountered obstacles — conditions and attitudes that prevent writers from writing well

ADULT STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES

SAMPLE I:

Maine is a beautiful state. People like me love Maine because it is so beautiful.

Maine has the wilderness. The woods are full of wildlife such as moose, deer, and birds. People come to Maine because these animals are so rare to them.

In the spring and summer the lakes and rivers are very high. People like to go canoeing, fishing, swimming and sailing.

On top of the mountains you can see a pretty view. Some people like to climb and camp out like me. I still like to climb mountains and camp out.

There is a lot of farmland here in Maine. Crops are grown on the farmland. People like to go blueberry picking and strawberry picking.

The farms, barns, farmhouses, stonewalls and fields are peaceful. Even the people are friendly. In some fields some people are haying and animals are grazing.

SAMPLE II:

I feel there would not be any reaction from me. I think people should do there thing. I like most of the old fashion Ideas. I guess that means I am getting old.

The author is not in favor of making your own vows. He believes in the trad ways of mother and father. Short but I hope sweet.

SAMPLE III:

Are you eighteen years old and sick and tired of not being treated like adults? Well, you should be.

When you turned eighteen, you were considered old enough to vote. You were no longer under your parents' supervision. You could move out of your house and live on your own. You made your own decisions and ran your own life.

When you turned thirteen, you were charged "adult admission" at the movies. Then, after you paid the adult cost, you couldn't see an adult movie.

Can you tell me why, as adults, you cannot drink alcohol? You should be given the right to that responsibility. If you want that right, don't abuse it.

Alcohol is a big problem in this world because of the people who misuse it. It's not just the eighteen year olds. It's the older, more experienced adults, too. You have just as much right to drink as they do. They misuse alcohol and still keep the right to drink it.

Fight to be an adult. I know when I turn eighteen, I want to be an adult.

SAMPLE IV:

I believe wrestling on late night television is a complete waste of viewers time and television air time. It's a real sport turned into some superficial show.

The phoniest part of wrestling is the matches. They are totally uneven. On guy might be five foot ten 180 pounds AND the other six foot five, 250 pounds. Wrestling matches are supposed to be set up according to weight and class. You don't have to be Howard Cosell to know the outcome of a match. Obviously the little guy is going to get creamed.

If losing a match isn't enough humiliation you should see their uniforms. These grown men parade around in front of the public dressed in colored underwear or tights. Some come out wearing masks or gloves. A few wrestlers wear skimpy little loin clothes and no footwear. It looks like Halloween in the ring.

The names they choose are hysterical. One is "Sargent Slaughter". This guy is an ex-Marine sargent, hard to believe. Another is "Marvelous Maraco" and he has an agent named "the grand wizard". I've seen this guy wrestle and he's far from Marvelous. The Wizard guy is just a jerk with a mouth. There's no connection between the names and the way these guy's wrestle.

All these guys usually have some kind of act to follow or show to put on, that goes along with their clothing and their names. "Sargent Slaughter" carries a flag, wears his Marine hat and plays an american theme song. When one guy named "Animal" gets in the ring, he chews up the turnbuckles. A trio called the "Samoans" all wear little loin Clothes and have long, black, bushy hair. They get in the ring and start jumping all over the place. They look like cavemen.

The matches that all these apparent wrestlers put on are completely fake. These grown up men go flying across the ring at each other, jump off ropes (4 feet in the air) onto one another, put each other in holds, throw each other all over the ring and throw fancy name punches at each other, and there's hardly any contact. It is visibly clear when one guy jumps from the ropes onto his oponent he is roughly six to twelve inches above his body. The holds these guys supposedly struggle to get out of are simple enough for a child to get out of. There's enough room between the arm and the opponents head so the guy could slip out. Then there's the ever so fatal heart punch or bear hugs. You'd think when one of the wrestlers got hit they were dying. They fall to the floor and start having convulsions. Some just lay there in agony and pain. The thing is the punches are 2 or 3 inches off the guys chest. Or the speed is reduced drastically before the punch lands.

These guys who call themselves wrestlers have big ego's and big mouths. They'll get on the air and start screaming about how theire going to get this guy or another. They mouth off about how great they are and how wimpy their opponents are. They tell the viewers how "they'll beat the opponents and make him beg for mercy sending him crawling home." Then they start in with, "You'll wish you never got into wrestling " or "You'll regret it by the time I get done with you!" They make it sound like a coroner should be at ringside.

The thing that really make me gag is the places these weirdos grab each other. They go for the crotch and spin each other around. Or they grab an ear or bite an armpit. They sit on each other and grab a foot, a hand, or their favorite, by the hair of the head. These guys grab anything they can hold onto. Its foolish.

Because the program you see on television about wrestling is so phony, it's definitely a complete waste of air time to continue showing it. They should have the real thing or take it off the air.

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING

1. The essay should demonstrate a clear sense of **purpose,** evidenced by:
    a. an understanding of the writing task
    b. an understanding of the writer's role — who is the writer and what does he/she want to accomplish?
    c. consideration of the needs of the reader
    d. a manageable focus stated in an unambiguous thesis
    e. a strong opening paragraph

2. The **content** of the essay should convey several substantive ideas that develop the writer's point of view and are clearly relevant to the thesis.

3. The essay should be **organized** according to a principle that is clear at once to the reader, and followed throughout the essay. Ideas and support should follow logically, both between and within paragraphs. Paragraphs should be unified and complete.

4. The writer **supports** his/her ideas with illustrations, examples, data, etc. that are relevant, specific, and substantive. Using this support material, the writer shows full awareness of the reader's needs.

5. The writer uses **language** that is clear, specific, precise and concise. The writing should be interesting and easy to read.

6. The writing should be virtually error-free. What **surface errors** do appear, however, should not interfere with communication between writer and reader.

OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

1. **Not writing**
   Writing is a skill and just as any skill is mastered, writers must practice. Those who don't write are not writers, but they can achieve the skill.
2. **Not revising**
   Inexperienced writers don't see revising as a necessary step in writing, often feeling that "if it doesn't come out right the first time, it will never be good". Students need to be reassured that revising is the secret to good writing, not a weakness or a sign of stupidity.
3. **No audience** (real or imagined)
   The writer cannot anticipate the readers' needs without directing the writing to a specific audience. Writing without an audience eliminates the possibility of either predicting or actually seeing how readers respond.
4. **No sense of purpose**
   The writer simply lists facts or vents emotions about the topic without knowing just why he/she is writing about it. Many times assignments are seen as busy work. The writing that results is empty and lifeless, often chaotic.
5. **No sense of self as a writer:**
   "I'm not a good writer; I was never very good at grammar."
   "I hate to write, and I avoid it as much as possible."
   "My grandfather wasn't a good writer, my father wasn't a good writer, so I know I'm not a good writer. Never will be."
   "Writing's too personal. I don't want anyone to read my stuff."
   "I don't know anything about this — how do you expect me to write about it?"
   "I have never written a paper. I have nothing to say that anyone would want to read."
   "I don't know what you want."
   "I don't have time to do this — it's too much work."
   "I don't have anything to write with."
6. **No sense that writing is a life skill, not a talent reserved for a profound and graceful few.**
   "Good writers are born, not made."
   "If it's not perfect the first time, it will never be any good."
   "It doesn't matter how I write this paper — you're not an English teacher."
7. **First language interference**
   If the student speaks English as a second or even third language, the writing may show this even if you don't detect an accent. Some signs are dropped endings from nouns and verbs, confused word order, incorrect prepositions (often associated with use of idioms), missing or incorrect articles.
8. **Learning disabilities**
   An estimated 5% of the general population is learning disabled. Among adult students, this may range as high as 20%. Some signs are:
   - hyperactivity
   - consistently short attention span
   - emotional instability
   - inability to alter a response
   - indications of visual perception problems, such as transposed letters/words, inability to copy correctly, failure to read from left to right
   - uncommon awkwardness
   - use of both hands for writing, drawing, etc.
   - holding a writing implement in an awkward position or weakly, often breaking leads because of excessive pressure
   - inability to verbalize well — related especially to direction or time
   - poor sentence structure
   - omitting or distorting some consonant sounds.

9. **Vision impairment**
   This may show up as poor reading ability, holding the book or head at awkward angles, squinting, or reluctance to participate in class.
10. **Hearing impairment**
    The student may not follow discussion well, or withdraw from the discussion altogether. In writers with severe hearing loss, writing may mimic first language interference, in that syntactical and phonetic features may be awkward, even incomprehensible.

MANAGING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

In this section you will find:

A brief discussion of the whole language approach, including:

- creating opportunities for GED students to read
- how to teach students to read critically

A list of ideas for integrating writing into the GED prep class:

- Free writing
- Note-taking
- Questioning
- Outlining
- Summarizing
- Comparing/Contrasting
- Practice essays
- Journal writing
- Keeping a reading journal

A discussion about designing assignments

Some suggestions for keeping records on your students' writing progress

MANAGING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH

The whole language approach is, very simply stated, the simultaneous teaching/learning of different language skills. It is often used in public school reading and language skills programs, as well as in adult literacy and basic education programs. For the GED test, the whole language approach can be used to strengthen critical reading skills and improve writing competence. The success of the whole language approach is that, as students begin to understand the elements, structure and function of written language, they can put the pieces together more easily and effectively themselves. As students learn to read better, they realize what a writer does to help them out, so they can better anticipate their own reader's needs.

GED preparation teachers need to create opportunities for students to read. Some ideas are:

1. setting up **reading discussion groups,** so that students can discuss what they read either in or out of class.
2. having students **write reading journals,** in which they react to what they've read. The reading can be one page or a book. But it should interest the student and provoke some kind of response.
3. **provide reading material** to teach the skills of selecting main ideas, drawing out unwritten topic sentences, identifying supporting material.
4. use **passages from GED preparation materials**
5. **bring a variety of reading materials to class,** including popular magazines such as *Soap Opera Digest, Sports Illustrated, Popular Mechanics, Parents;* short humorous articles and stories; cartoons. **Allow occasional breaks for students to look over the material.** They may find that they're interested in reading after all.

You may need to teach students how to take the test. The new version of the GED test examines higher level reading skills than the current version does. One technique is as follows:

- **Ask your students** to read the first sentence of a GED reading passage, and set goals for their reading using the following questions:

  What do I expect to learn from this passage?
  What clues do I find in the first sentence?
  Will I read all of the passage, or look for only relevant sentences?
- **Next, ask students** to list in the order they expect to find them, the points the writer will discuss. They can check off each point covered in the reading. If they don't get the clues in the first sentence, suggest that they read the second, and so on, until they begin to see the writer's purpose.
- **When they've finished reading,** discuss their answers to the three questions. The more of these exercises students do, the more accurate their reading goals will become.
- **Following that, offer a writing topic,** asking students to summarize their responses in one sentence. They can read each other's summary sentences and list what they expect the writer to cover.

An exercise like this accomplishes two goals: 1) it teaches about the structure of paragraphs and essays, and 2) it provides the writer with immediate feedback about the effectiveness of his/her summary sentence. As students learn about main ideas and support for them in what they read, they can instantly apply that to a writing assignment.

PRACTICE WRITING

The first hurdle that beginning writers must overcome is that of not writing — not writing at all or not writing enough. Because writing is a process that students must develop and incorporate in their use of written language, GED teachers must give students frequent opportunities to write. This practice writing can take many forms, as long as it is purposeful, expected by the students as being a regular part of class time, and necessary — that is, they must clearly understand that there is no substitute for writing practice.
Here are some ideas:

1. **Free Writing.**

Freewriting is described in detail on page 14 of this manual. Its uses as a prewriting tool include: discovering what the writer knows about the subject; identifying a subject or a focus; clarifying a point of view. It is especially useful for blocked writers and for writers who have a tendency to leap into writing paragraphs without figuring out what they're going to say. It slows down the writer's internal editor without limiting the substance. The important thing is to get ideas on paper first and to get them to sound good later.

2. **Note-taking.** Teach your students how to take notes — many do not know the first thing about it. At the beginning of each class, present a list of about ten abbreviations to use in notetaking. Show them one of your notebooks, and have them keep a notebook as well. Pass out notes from the lesson you're about to present so they can follow along. Note-taking teaches organizing; it shows students the relationships between important and unimportant; it helps students retain more information. Regarding writing specifically, students can begin to apply organizing principles that they've seen work. They can use note-taking as a way of focusing and organizing their essays. It also gives students another opportunity to write, to keep their pencils moving while they think and listen.

3. **Questioning.** Have students write or ask three (any specified number will do) questions about what you're teaching — not necessarily about writing, but about any subject area. This can be done at the end of class to use the following class meeting, at the beginning of class to guide that evening's discussion, or as questions on quizzes or for homework. This activates their powers of reasoning, their inquisitiveness, and stimulates interest in subject areas. Questioning techniques are also very helpful in focusing an essay and formulating a thesis.

4. **Outlining.** Similar in purpose to notetaking, outlining helps students begin to see the relationships among various elements of written language. They must be able to identify the main idea, support material, and make judgments about the relevance and importance of ideas or points made in the passage. As students become more familiar with outlining, they'll take the time to plan their own writing, and see that as an aid, rather than as busy work. Remember, all writers don't follow the formal Harvard outline format. Simple ordered lists, clusters, or even diagrams are sometimes enough.

5. **Summarizing.** Have students write summaries of passages, first using the text and gradually weaning them from the source to rely on their memories. Summaries help students identify the important points in a passage and reconstruct the ideas in their own words and sentences. Expect first attempts to be sketchy and perhaps inaccurate — they'll improve.

6. **Comparing/Contrasting.** You can use this in any content area. In science, for example, have students draw comparisons between two theories, ideas or explanations. The advantages of this include putting to use many of the skills that students learn in the tasks previously mentioned — identifying main and supporting points, organizing, reconstructing in their own words. Further, it forces students to evaluate material from two sources. Some of the writing prompts in the GED essay may contain words that the student is unfamiliar with. For example, many do not realize that compare means "to find similarities" and contrast means "to find differences". (For more information about understanding essay questions see Section H, page 51).

7. **Practice Essays.** An essay is what the GED requires, so you need to give your students a lot of time to try out their essay-writing skills. When your students are ready, assign essays. But be sure you don't fall into the essay-a-week trap. Requiring too many individual papers emphasizes product, not process. Allow plenty of time to revise. Make sure students plan and leave themselves time to revise, understanding the need to do both in the official essay test. As you progress, and the students seem close to test-fitness, give them several opportunities for timed essay writing to get accustomed to the nature of the test, and to discover what they need to work on in order to complete the test successfully in 45 minutes.

8. **Journal writing.** Try it. Some teachers use journal writing extensively and with pretty good results. Students must see the purpose of journal-writing and take it seriously and write frequently. Journal-writing can be focused or free — your choice.

Focused journals deal with a single topic or issue. Suggest that your students follow a current event, such as the arms sale to Iran, considering such questions as: Why Iran? Should the 5th amendment apply in this case? Are we learning everything that we should know? The focus of a journal can also be more personal, such as child care: Am I happy with our child care arrangement? Is my child happy there? What questions have I wanted to ask the child care provider, but haven't? Encourage students to generate their own questions — to explore their own feelings about an issue.

I see distinct advantages to focused journal-writing because students see more purpose to that, and don't feel that they have to bare their souls to keep a journal.

If you assign journal-writing, keep a journal yourself.

9. **Reading journals.** A reading journal allows a student to respond to a piece of writing and keep track of how and why he/she wrote such responses. This is a particularly good tool for preparing for the GED, which requires more sophisticated reading skills.

DESIGNING ASSIGNMENTS

Unless a writer is interested in the topic, has an opinion about it, and has the knowledge to write a substantive response, the writing is not going to be good. So, offer a number of topics from which the student may choose. See Suggested Writing Topics, Appendix I, or design your own, keeping a few things in mind:

The TOPIC should:

- —be based on information general enough to be familiar to most students;
- —be worth writing about (remember: "What I did on my summer vacation"?)
- —be clearly stated and contain only the amount of information necessary for the writer to respond;
- —require the student to use the same critical thinking skills that he/she will use in the essay. Don't ask for a simple recitation of facts; ask for an evaluation of those facts.

The PAPERS written in response to the topic should:

- —exhibit charactertistics comparable to those described in the essay scoring guide and can be reliably scored with those criteria.
- —illustrate the full range of writing ability. That is, the question can be answered by weak writers as well as by highly skilled writers.
- —clearly address the question.
- —not have one predictable and limited answer.
- —be a fully developed response — the topic may be too broad if students cannot fully respond in the alloted time.
- —not be overly emotional or insupportably biased, resulting in rhetorical, general and ubsubstantiated statements.

Consider that the easiest piece of writing is the personal narrative, followed by a personal expression piece (How do you feel about X?). Begin at the point that is most comfortable for the student, and gradually guide your students toward the essay.

Be reasonable about the length and type of the assignment. Try out each assignment before you offer it to your class. Be careful not to overestimate your students' ability to respond. That will spell F-A-I-L-U-R-E and will undermine the writing confidence that your student has built up. You must also be wary of underestimating their ability, which will cause frustration and will limit the progress that the student can make. You may feel that you're walking a fine line, but as you know your students better, you can more easily judge their ability to tackle writing tasks.

Above all, construct assignments that foster success.

RECORD-KEEPING

Perhaps the single most valuable offering you can make is to SHOW your students that they have made great progress: saying so is not enough. Keep records to achieve two aims: 1) the records should be useful tools to design your instructional program, both individually and collectively; and 2) they should be shared with your students to help build confidence and encourage the student to share in identifying priorities for your work together. Some suggestions follow:

1. Make sure all students keep a **writing file.** This should contain all work relating to "published" pieces — notes, outlines, pictures, doodling, rough and final drafts. They shouldn't throw anything out. As students become better critics, they will see clearly and without any help from you, that they have become writers. If you don't see improvement after several weeks' work, you should reevaluate the student's needs and try a new approach. Either you or the student can keep the files. All such records should be kept confidential, available to only you and the writer.

2. Make a **quick checklist** of all students and their progress. You can use this to group the class into smaller units for instruction. It is also helpful for you to know at a glance where your students need help. See Appendix II, page 69.

If you have time, and feel it would be helpful, complete a **writing assessment form,** such as the one offered in Appendix II, page 65. At mid-semester and toward the end of the course, complete it again, noting progress and existing needs. This is particularly useful for students who don't seem to be progressing, or who feel a great deal of frustration because they fail to see the progress they're making. Sharing such an analysis with some students helps to break down that huge task of learning to write into smaller, more manageable objectives, such as recognizing the needs of the audience, or writing a good thesis statement.

4. Be sure to include copies of all **peer response forms** in the students' folders. This continually reinforces the writer's success at reaching a REAL audience. If all writers take the task seriously — and if they don't, do something about that — the peer reviews should be extremely helpful for revision. For more information on peer evaluation, see Section F, page 44.

5. **Use graphs or tables,** to illustrate students' progress. By using the criteria featured on the holistic scoring scale, the focus of instruction will be clear.

6. **Checklists** are useful; balance them according to the holistic scoring scale.

THE ESSAY

In this section you will find:

A definition of "essay" and its application to the GED test

A guide for writing essays and reviewing the draft

THE ESSAY

There is no universally accepted definition of an essay, but for the purposes of the GED test essay, an essay:

—is a "moderately brief discussion of a restricted topic".

—is "writing that explains."

—may inform, instruct, persuade (or try to), try to solve a problem, analyze, summarize known facts, speculate, or help the writer discover new concepts or order.

A narrative essay is the easiest to write, since the writer writes about him/herself. If beginning writers start with a narrative essay, they can more easily progress to expository pieces, in which they run the risk of being "wrong".

An essay can be formal or informal. The GED essay is of a formal nature — it has a serious purpose, identified for the writer in the writing prompt; it is logically arranged; it has a suggested length.

An essay is judged on its unity, structure and clarity. When assessing the effectiveness of an essay, consider these four features:

—the strength and clarity of the thesis statement

—the unity of the piece

—the logic and development apparent in the organization

—the writer's tone — the way the writer treats the subject.

"Effective expository writing derives from several strategies: defining, illustrating, categorizing, establishing criteria, tracing implications", and considering causal relationships. The writer employs these strategies in a combination that works for the subject and the audience.

There has been considerable discussion about the length and form of an essay. There are the five paragraph essay and the 300 word essay. Some believe that only the writer and the subject determine the length.

For the GED, the answer must be well-constructed — based on the holistic scoring scale. GEDTS suggest a length of about 200 words to encourage students to fully develop and support their ideas. It is not a factor in evaluation, however. Since students will be concerned with length, have them write 200 words in their handwriting, to see what space 200 words takes up. That will ease their minds about the length, and will help them plan their time during the "official" essay.

AN ESSAY WRITING GUIDE

An essay has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This guide will help students put those pieces together. Make it available to them while they're working.

1. Gather enough ideas for writing. You should be familiar with your subject, but you may need to recognize what you know about it. Free-writing, clustering, brainstorming, thinking and even talking to yourself or others is a help.

2. Ask yourself, "What do I want to say to my reader?" Then finish the sentence "I want to tell you that . . ." This will help you focus your writing, so that you're not attempting to do too much in a short essay.

3. Read your draft out loud, or have someone else read it to you. If something doesn't sound quite right, it probably isn't. Mark it to change later.

4. Trust your instincts. When you read your draft, listen to the voice inside you that complains, "too long", "too boring", "what does that have to do with anything?".

5. Do an after the draft outline. This involves listing your thesis statement, followed by the topic sentences of each paragraph. If you get no clear sense of the entire paper, figure out what you have to change, omit, or add.

6. Check your introduction. Do you deliver what you promise? If the answer is no, rework your introductory paragraph or the body so that they fit together.

7. Check paragraph divisions. Though there is no hard and fast rule about paragraph length, you can sometimes see at a glance where you need to add information or split a paragraph into two or more. A general rule of thumb is that paragraphs of 1-2 sentences are too short, and paragraphs that go on for more than half a page are too long. Aim for between four and six sentences per paragraph.

8. Check for transitions between ideas. Will the reader easily see how you got from one thought to another? If your writing forces the reader to make those connections, you need to revise.

9. Check your conclusion. Does it tie into your introduction? It shouldn't repeat what you've already said, but the relation between the two should be clear.

10. Be sure that your support material is sufficient, vivid and specific.

EVALUATING WRITING

In this section you will find:

General guidelines about what to look for, and when you find it, what to say about it

Your role as a critic of your students' work and as a model writer/reviewer

Questions that you can use to talk about writing to writers

The student's role as a reviewer

EVALUATING WRITING

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Teachers evaluate student writing for two reasons. The first is to diagnose the incoming student's writing problems and the second is to guide and focus feedback as students develop as writers. As we evaluate, we must accept some features about writers and their writing:

—the needs and abilities of the student

Writing is an individualistic process. Change occurs slowly. Adults come to class with varying educational backgrounds and skills. The only appropriate basis for comparison is the student's own writing. Be patient; improvement may not be apparent for some time.

—the student's readiness to accept comments

Gauge your comments to each student's personality. You must create a climate of trust and easy interchange. Be supportive and encouraging, respect the individual who bares his/her soul to you, and don't use red pen.

—what's said is as important as how it's said

Rather than commenting as you read, read the entire piece through once and then reread to identify what you feel needs attention first. Effective evaluation improves the writing; it does not merely identify errors. And remember, as writers change their composing behaviors, they may make more mistakes. Though this may seem like backsliding, view it as positive. Without risking error, the writer won't develop a process for conveying ideas clearly.

—a limited number of concrete objectives make effective writing a reachable goal

Break down the task of revision and writing improvement into some simple and easily attainable objectives that will yield the greatest initial improvement and demonstrate the student's competence. Start small with aims that you know the student can reach, and teach to those objectives. It's helpful to use the writing process as a guide — at what point does the student's process cease to work? For example, a disorganized paper may not be the result of the student's inability to organize, but may be related more closely to a lack of focus for the paper.

—appropriateness of writing tasks

If students cannot involve themselves in the topic in some way, even the best, most thoughtful evaluator cannot spark change. For more on this, see Section D page 31, Designing Assessments, and Appendix I, Suggested Writing Topics.

Regarding errors — let students correct their own errors. Be careful not to focus on every one. To start with, identify one error that the student repeats. Teach the student how to correct that error and how to avoid making it in the future. The student succeeds, one step at a time. Later indicate how many spelling errors (as an example) there are and let the writer locate and correct them. Finally, let the student identify, locate and correct to achieve the ultimate goal — complete independence.

THE NATURE OF YOUR COMMENTS:

Following are some rules of thumb for commenting on student papers. These "rules" exist because they work. They work for you — your response is unequivocal, and they work for the student — they guide the revision.

BE CLEAR. Say exactly what you mean — no jokes, no sarcasm, no symbols or vague hints. Avoid single words like "no" which can mean either that the student's information was wrong, the student has incorrectly written something, or you don't agree with what the student has said.

Example:

Don't write: ?, unclear, or what?

Do write: I don't understand this. Perhaps if you define X, I will.

BE POSITIVE. Comment on what the student has done well, or on what he/she has begun to do, but may not have carried out successfully.

Example:

Don't write: Take this out.

Do write: You've drawn your ideas together well in this sentence. Is this your real beginning?

BE THOROUGH, without identifying every error. Show the student that you take his/her work seriously. A few marginal notes and comma corrections don't convey that.

BE THOUGHTFUL AND HELPFUL. Your comments should yield greater understanding and internalizing of the writing process, not a resentful view of those "boring" grammar rules.

FOCUS ON WHAT WILL YIELD THE GREATEST SUCCESS. You may have to sit on your hands to refrain from commenting on what you see that needs correction. Keep the student and the purpose of the writing in mind and sit on your hands, if that's what it takes.

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER return a paper devoid of comment, either written or oral. (Written comments are better, since the student can refer to them later.) You may find it more appropriate and more helpful at times to discuss a paper with the student, to avoid marking it up.

A good way to complete your evaluation is to write a final summary which consolidates your feelings about the writing and your suggestions for improvement.

THE TEACHER AS CRITIC/MODEL

THE CRITIC: The teacher's first task is to diagnose the student's writing needs. Some suggestions:

A. **Interview the student.** Determine his/her trouble spots — whatever seems to give the writer the most trouble will often be the spot at which you must assist. Some questions to consider:

—Begin with some questions to break the ice, help the student feel more comfortable. The "Hi, how are you?", "Tell me about your life" type.

—Ease into questions about the test

"How do you feel about taking your GED?"

"How can I help you prepare for the test?"

"Do you have any immediate questions or concerns?"

"What do you feel the most/least anxious about?"

—Follow with questions about writing.

"How much writing have you done?"

"Do you like to write?"

"Do you see yourself as a writer?"

"What do you need from me in order to write well for this test?"

—Then, ask questions about writing difficulties.

"What part is hardest for you to do?"

"What part of writing do you most enjoy?"

"Do you feel you need someone's help to write a letter or a paper for a class (as examples)?"

"What do you consider your greatest strength as a writer?"

"Your greatest weakness?"

"Do you feel prepared to write the GED essay?"

These are but a few suggestions. You'll develop your own list as you go along. Follow your students. See what they need.

B. **Draw up a writing profile,** once you have samples of the student's writing. In order for this to yield accurate information, you should see more than one piece of writing. Remember, although it may be informative to you to perform an error analysis, it is not helpful to the student to simply know what errors he/she has committed. In profiling the writing, identify the greatest need the student has. See Appendix II for a sample writing profile.

C. **Use checklists,** samples of which appear in Appendix II. These allow you to respond immediately to the student and, if used throughout the course, can be a writing guide that the student can continue to use when the class is over. Using a single standard, in this case the holistic scoring scale, can help the students internalize the scoring criteria and reinforce the lessons you teach them in the class.

D. **Meet with the student.** This is especially important if you have an open-entry/open-exit GED program, or if your program is highly individualized. Teacher-student conferences are extremely helpful if they are conducted appropriately. One model is presented by Moberg, in *Writing in Groups*. It requires the reviewer to:

A: Appreciate: Begin with praise.

S: Sayback. You "sayback" to the writer what the writing said to you. This is an easy check for focus and clarity.

A: Askback. This gives you a chance to ask for changes, either more or less of what's there. All comments in this "askback" stage are questions.

Another way to discuss the student's paper is to allow the student to talk first. You listen, respond where the student needs help, addressing the content that the student has concerns about first. Address only one problem at a time, rather than list all that you think should be changed in the paper. Though teacher-student conferences should be directed by the student's needs, the teacher often has to control the conversation by asking appropriate questions. See below for information about useful questions.

A third method of review for individualized or staggered classes is reading aloud. The student reads aloud, noting where the writing is awkward. Encourage the student to make changes, turning to you only when there seems no way out. Be alert to signals that the student is puzzled, frustrated, or simply not concentrating, and make yourself available.

THE MODEL: Do no expect of your class what you aren't willing to do yourself. You will model writing behavior and reaction to comments, whether you intend this or not. So, intend it. Write with your class. Share your work with them. Bring in old papers you have written to use for group discussion, or to use as examples in your lessons. Be sure that you convey to your class that all writers make mistakes, that all writers need to revise.

QUESTIONS FOR TALKING ABOUT WRITING

Questioning is a very effective teaching technique, especially so when teaching writing, since the goal of the writing teacher is to foster independence in student writers. Open-ended questions clearly demonstrate to the student the transition from teacher-as-authority to writer-as-authority. They challenge the student's creative process and activate critical thinking skills. Questioning cannot be used to the exclusion of all other techniques, but used correctly it can help you achieve the desired results. You can use either direct or indirect questions.

Direct questions tend to be more pedagogical with the teacher assuming a prominent role in the direction of the conference and the revision of the paper. Look at the following examples:

1. **"How do you begin a writing project?"**
   This focuses the student on the process of writing and demonstrates your interest in the individual.
2. **"What do you like about the paper?"**
   You obviously see good features of the writing which the student may not, and you communicate that. When dealing with a student who sees no good, try this:
   "List three things you think you've done well, and one thing you'd like to improve."
   This tells the student that there are at least three positive features, forces the student to see writing more positively, and helps the student focus on only one problem at a time. The "good" list may include:
   "I finished it." This is certainly valid and may signal a major achievement for that student.
   "I spelled everything right." A comment like this may or may not be true, but that's okay, initially. You're discovering how the student feels about writing and what he/she knows about it.
   "My sentences are good." This tells you that the student is focusing on surface errors and may not even be aware of larger issues.
   The student may label as good something that you think is poorly done. Follow up such responses to find out what tells the student the X, Y or Z is good.
   The item to improve might be:
   "I don't like any of it." This tells a lot about the student's attitude towrd writing.
   "My teachers always said I wrote run-on sentences."
   This says one of two things: that the student is not yet able to take responsibility for evaluating his/her writing or that it never occurred to him/her that evaluating writing was something the writer did.
3. **"Which section of your paper do you like best?"**
   This question is useful for students who are stuck on the mechanics. This urges them to examine the paper and see a good entire section. It is also an effective way of sharing the responsibility of diagnosing and remediating writing problems.
4. **"Could you list three other words/prhases/ideas that would work there?"**
   You challenge creative thinking and get the student to see the value of making choices about language. It is the writer's responsibility to select words that most clearly express the ideas in the paper.
5. **"What do you mean by 'thing' here?"**
   We all have what are called "utility words"; they leap to mind when all others fail. The problem is, they may mean very little to our readers. This question helps the student identify utility words and list specific and vivid language to replace them. It also identifies the writer's role of helping the reader. And it directly challenges the creative abilities of the student, abilities which may not have been challenged in a long time.
6. **"How do you feel about the comments you received on this paper?"**
   This gives the student a chance to explore various feelings about how readers feel about his/her work. Help students understand that the writer makes the final choices, and must weigh the comments and choose appropriate ones. If a student seems upset by comments, help him/her understand them and work through the negative feelings that arose. Put on your counselor's hat.

Indirect questions aid in diffusing negative energy that may impede the creative process; these questions help the writer step back a bit from the problem at hand. They may help you and the student discuss your shared concern in a more general way. For example:

1. **"If you want to be truly relaxed, what do you do?"**
   This is a good replacement for "You seem to be upset about this." A suggestion of other activities may induce a different state of mind. It may also yield a more relevant topic for the student to explore.

2. **"Do you want to take a moment to collect your thoughts?"**
   This communicates your observation that more control is needed. It replaces a comment such as "You need to focus on this idea." It also gives your approval for a "time out", saying that writers sometimes need to stop writing in order to work. This helps dispel the notion that writing is putting pen to paper and filling a sheet with words.
3. **"Why don't you take a few minutes alone to brainstorm about this topic?"**
   You offer the student a chance to create, without the pressure of the teacher looking on.
4. **"Why do I get the feeling that I care more about your writing than you do?"**
   You communicate your feelings without being accusatory. You also reassure the student that you DO care, while suggesting that you should not be the only one.
   A caution: you MAY care more than you need to, in which case you should step back and leave the writing — or the lack of it — to the writer. Figure out why the situation exists: Is the student not interested in the topic? Is the student just in a funk that evening? Interceding by taking over the writing is counterproductive if the student simply doesn't want to write that paper.

As effective as questioning is, however, it can be misapplied. Four examples follow:

1. **Not allowing sufficient time** for a response may elicit no response at all. Learn to be comfortable with silence. "Perhaps I should rephrase my question", "What I mean is . . .", "Do you see what I mean?" all may interrupt a valid and active thought process. If you tend to jump in too soon, time yourself. You'll be surprised to see that very little time actually passes in the span of silence.
2. **Phrasing the question to elicit an expected response** causes you to do all the critical thinking. Your student needs to develop a greater degree of independence as a writer; these questions don't help that transition. An example of such a question is: "This would sound better if you started here, don't you think?"
3. Asking gentle, open-ended questions with a **contradictory or confusing tone of voice or body language** can send negative messages to the student. Such messages might be:
   "I'm exhausted and I don't have the time for this."
   "Why can't you get this?"
   "I am angry with you." (without communicating why)
4. **Asking inappropriate questions** can create chaos. You may emphasize small issues, or overwhelm the student by identifying too many problems. "Why did you put this comma here?" when the paper lacks focus and is completely disorganized does not help. There are larger issues to resolve.

These examples are merely suggestions. Your teaching style and the personalities of your students will determine the types of questions you use. Some questions are more effective with some students; some won't seem to work at all.

The underlying message in this section is to be aware of what you're asking and why. Phrase your questions and comments to develop a sense of confidence and independence in the writers you teach.

THE STUDENT AS CRITIC

Students are critics twice — of what they write and of what they read. Peer review is an excellent technique to develop students' abilities to do both.

Why is peer review a valuable tool?

—Writers need readers; this gives them a real audience.

—Writers need feedback to judge the effect of their writing on the audience.

—Experience as a reviewer helps writers become better readers of their own and others' writing.

—Using the writing process approach with peer review, a teacher SHOULD never have to take a paper home, because the evaluation is done in class.

Student reactions to peer review are almost always positive. Students acquire the language and the emotional capacity to talk about their writing, and they know that the writer is the ultimate decision-maker. It is truly an empowerment tool.

Before you introduce peer review, be sure the class is ready to participate. You'll soon know the class chemistry and you can begin with an essay taken from a book (see Sections C and I of this manual or Koch and Brazil for samples) or use your own writing. Besides demonstrating that even a teacher's writing is not perfect, you have the ideal opportunity to model writer's behavior. How you, the teacher, respond to feedback will influence how your students accept and evaluate their peer's responses.

Consider having your students list what they like about the piece or what needs improving before you hand out your own criteria. Use their ideas as a beginning point for peer review forms. The class list will probably be very similar to your own, though the language may differ. This allows you to teach from where your students are, and helps them absorb the criteria in their own terms.

You may choose to set up response groups for the semester, or simply have students swap papers. Each student should read 2-3 papers to allow for sufficient response. Have students review their own papers first, then send them out for review. Do this all in class — it saves time and copying, but more importantly, allows you to monitor students' progress as writers and as reviewers.

Peer review can be oral or written. Oral review is certainly quicker. One method is known as PQP:

P—praise (What do you like about the paper?);

Q—question (What questions do you have about it?);

and

P—polish (What does the writer need to do to improve the writing?)

With the PQP method, the writer says nothing — no justification, explanation, or questions. After the conference, the writer determines what he/she will do with the comments. How the peer review alters the paper is up to the writer, so he/she must be able to weigh the feedback and use what seems to improve the writing, and not try and do everything the reviewers suggest. Sometimes suggestions conflict. The writer must decide.

Written responses have the advantage of permanence. The writer takes the review sheet and can use it during the revising stage, referring to it as needed. Review sheets also focus the review, and help the writer absorb the criteria. Using the sheet time and time again, the writer becomes used to what is expected, and knows what effective writing is. You can make the form as detailed as you want it, and you'll probably find that you want to change the forms periodically.

HOLISTIC SCORING

In this section you will find:

A definition of holistic scoring and a description of its purpose

GED Essay Scoring Guide

HOLISTIC SCORING

The term "holistic" comes not from "holy", but from "whole". Holistic scoring measures the overall effectiveness of the "whole" piece of writing; no one feature or section is more important than any other. This approach contrasts sharply with the analytic scoring with which most of us are familiar, in which a teacher identifies errors as justification for a given grade. Holistic scoring does not reflect the number of errors in a piece of writing, but indicates the rater's first impression of its effectiveness.

The holistic scoring scale, appears on the following page. The scores range from 1 to 6, and within each score will fall a wide range of writing abilities. The six-point scale, being even-numbered, avoids a mid-point and therefore eliminates the natural tendency to drift toward the middle. This forces the reader to make a choice, thus ensuring a more accurate assessment of the writing. For more information, see the GED Preview pages 41-42.

Although GED teachers will not score the test papers, teachers must be familiar with the scoring technique for two reasons:

1. To initially assess writing competence.
2. To determine an instructional program based on periodic assessments of the student's work.

In order for the holistic scale to be successful, the rater must have fully absorbed the criteria to offer a quick and true response to the student. Many papers will not be completely a 5 or a 3, but will exhibit qualities of different scores across the scale.

Following is a step-by-step guide to rating student papers:

1. Carefully read the writing topic. Note exactly what the question asks.
2. Write your own response to the topic. This allows you to completely understand the requirements of the task.
3. Carefully review the holistic scoring criteria.
4. Read each student's response quickly, in no more than 2 minutes. Do not mark or correct the paper.
5. Determine the appropriate score and record it on a separate scoring sheet. Do not write the score on the student's paper.

Although a holistic assessment of test papers requires no justification, the classroom teacher needs to communicate the reasons for each score in order for the student to become a better writer. By identifying the paper's weaknesses, the teacher can design a more effective plan for the student. When scoring the pre-test or subsequent papers, keep a few things in mind:

—**You are scoring the paper, not the student;** do not worry about the student's reaction to the score if you feel it is a fair assessment of the quality of the writing.

—**Do not make any marks on the paper** — use your score as a point to counsel/teach from. By not marking the paper, you tell the student that the score is not permanent. You do not label the writing, so the student is more apt to see a chance to improve.

—**Be sure that the student knows exactly why you have assigned a particular score.**

—**The target teaching range is 3-4,** dividing upper half papers from lower half papers. A student who consistently scores in the 1-2 range may benefit from more intensive writing instruction. A student who consistently scores in the 5-6 range is probably ready to take the test.

GED Essay Scoring Guide

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Papers will show *some or all* of the following characteristics.

Upper-half papers make clear a definite purpose, pursued with varying degrees of effectiveness. They also have a structure that shows evidence of some deliberate planning. The writer's control of English usage ranges from fairly reliable at 4 to confident and accomplished at 6.

6 Papers scored as a 6 tend to offer sophisticated ideas within an organization framework that is clear and appropriate for the topic. The supporting statements are particularly effective because of their substance, specificity, or illustrative quality. The writing is vivid and precise, though it may contain an occasional flaw.

5 Papers scored as a 5 are clearly organized with effective support for each of the writer's major points. The writing offers substantive ideas, though the paper may lack the flair or grace of a 6 paper. The surface features are consistently under control, despite an occasional lapse in usage.

4 Papers scored as a 4 show evidence of the writer's organizational plan. Support, though sufficient, tends to be less extensive or convincing than that found in papers scored as a 5 or 6. The writer generally observes the conventions of accepted English usage. Some errors are usually present, but they are not severe enough to interfere significantly with the writer's main purpose.

Lower-half papers either fail to convey a purpose sufficiently or lack one entirely. Consequently, their structure ranges from rudimentary at 3, to random at 2, to absent at 1. Control of the conventions of English usage tends to follow this same gradient.

3 Papers scored as a 3 usually show some evidence of planning or development. However, the organization is often limited to a simple listing or haphazard recitation of ideas about the topic, leaving an impression of insufficiency. The 3 papers often demonstrate repeated weaknesses in accepted English usage and are generally ineffective in accomplishing the writer's purpose.

2 Papers scored as a 2 are characterized by a marked lack of development or inadequate support for ideas. The level of thought apparent in the writing is frequently unsophisticated or superficial, often marked by a listing of unsupported generalizations. Instead of suggesting a clear purpose, these papers often present conflicting purposes. Errors in accepted English usage may seriously interfere with the overall effectiveness of these papers.

1 Papers scored as a 1 leave the impression that the writer has not only *not* accomplished a purpose, but has not made any purpose apparent. The dominant feature of these papers is the lack of control. The writer stumbles both in conveying a clear plan for the paper and in expressing ideas according to the conventions of accepted English usage.

* The zero score is reserved for papers which are blank, illegible, or written on a topic other than the one assigned.

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

In this section you will find:

Hints to understanding an essay question

The QAD outline for use during the test

A "formula" approach to taking an essay exam

General tips for taking tests of this nature

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

An essay test may be a new experience for many GED examinees; it may create new and unexpected test anxiety in your students. Knowing how to take such a test is as important as being able to construct a good essay. This section describes some test-taking strategies that may comfort the anxious or inexperienced student. The key to their success is that the student internalize the method. So, the more often you use a particular technique in class, the more likely it will be that the student will rely on that in the test situation. Try these suggestions, but experiment. As you get to know your students better and sharpen your own approach to teaching writing, you'll no doubt discover more than are listed here.

UNDERSTANDING AN ESSAY QUESTION

Any essay question has three important parts:

1. **the topic**
2. **a limiting word or phrase**
3. **a key word that tells the writer how to treat the topic**

Consider the question from page 16 of the GED Preview:

"Write a composition of about 200 words describing the effect of the automobile on modern life."

1. **The topic** is "the automobile."
2. The **limiting phrase** is its "effect . . . on modern life." The writer knows not to discuss how automobiles are manufactured, the history of automobiles, or the various types available.
3. The **key word** is "describes".

Understanding the key word is vital to analyzing the writing task. The writer should understand exactly what the question asks and do that but not more than that. Following is a list of key words which may appear in the GED Writing Skills, Part II writing prompt:

1. compare: to show how the topics in the prompt are similar
2. contrast: to show how the topics in the prompt are different
3. describe: to give an account in words. This does not require full treatment of the topic, but a tracing of major points.
4. discuss: to present in detail for consideration. The answer should be thorough.
5. explain: to make plain or understandable. The writer presents his/her clear view of the topic.
6. illustrate: to make clear by giving examples
7. select and support: to choose a response and defend it

In each case, the essay should contain specific details, examples and illustrations that develop the writer's main idea.

QAD OUTLINE:

Q = question

—What does this task require me to do?

A = answer

—What statement or opinion will I make?

OR

—What main idea will I develop?

D = detail

—What examples, reasons, or details will I use for support?

The QAD outline can be used to analyze the writing task as well as to organize the answer. For example:

Topic: Working parents of young children can choose between a family day care program, located in a private home, or a larger day care center. There are benefits and disadvantages to both settings. Write a 200 word essay in which you discuss the advantages, or the disadvantages or both, of day care centers as a place to take care of children while their parents work.

Question: 200 words about whether large day care centers are good places to take care of little kids.

Answer: They're really good.

Detail: All those people do is take care of kids — they don't have to do the laundry, get supper ready, or anything like that. And if they didn't like kids, they wouldn't work there. It's a real job, not just something to do while you're at home with your own kids. There are lots of kids to play together, and there are places for kids to sleep and eat and play. Besides, they're licensed by the state, so if there's anything wrong with them, the state would find out.

The answers to the three questions can be one word answers; they don't have to be sentences. (Only the examinee must be able to follow them, no one else even has to know what they mean.) Once this is done, the student should reread the question, to be sure that he/she is responding appropriately. Then, the A part of the outline can be written as the thesis statement; the D part can be reordered to sketch the body, and the student can begin. This might take 2-5 minutes out of 45, but it is time well spent.

A "FORMULA" APPROACH

The essay can follow a "formula". It can be written as a 4-5 paragraph essay. The first paragraph restates the task and presents the main point that the writer will follow up, demonstrating a clear understanding of the purpose. This paragraph can then be used by the examinee to plan the rest of the essay. For example:

> Working parents of young children can choose between a family day care program, located in a private home, and a larger day care center. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. However, I believe that there are too many problems that occur in a large day care center, so a family day care program is better for the children.

The middle 2-3 paragraphs, the body, contains support material — all the examples, illustrations, descriptions — that develops the main idea. In this example, the body would be a discussion of the "many problems that occur in a large day care center". The concluding paragraph restates the task again, closing the essay and reiterating the purpose.

Although it doesn't make for a particularly imaginative essay, this approach is effective and does require the writer to perform the necessary functions: analyzing the task, brainstorming to gather support material, writing a topic sentence, identifying examples, and arranging them in a logical order.

SOME TEST-TAKING TIPS

If the writing task offers a choice, as the "day care" example does, of advantages, disadvantages or both, the examinee should be aware that choosing to address both doubles the work. By selecting one point of view and following up, the essay will not only be easier, but will yield a writing sample that more accurately reflects the student's writing ability.

Slow writers may not have time to revise their answer in the 45 minute test period. It might be helpful for them to write on every other line and revise that draft, without rewriting the entire essay. This is also a good technique for examinees who write a messy first draft with many changes and arrows and cross-outs. They can rewrite from their draft more quickly than if it were written on every line and cluttered with notes.

Examinees should **take the time to plan,** as well as revise their essays. Two to five minutes at the beginning is plenty of time to plan, particularly if the writer is well-rehearsed in test-taking techniques. 10-15 minutes at the end should provide sufficient time to revise and edit the essay. Practicing this in simulated testing sessions will help your students judge their writing time correctly.

Advise students to **bring extra writing implements.** Writing in one color and revising in another sometimes helps a writer.

It is important for examinees to understand that **the essays do not have to be smudge and cross-out free.** Encourage them to use the scrap paper provided to plan their answer, write a draft, even do some freewriting if they seem to be stuck. They can revise, cross-out and erase within their final essay, as long as the end product is legible and the writer's final choices are clear to the rater.

Throughout the preparation period, **simulate the testing environment frequently,** so that your students know better how to allocate their time to different tasks. This also decreases the testing anxiety.

In all testing situations, simulated or otherwise, be sure to **have a working clock that is visible** to the examinees.

If the student is very tense about the essay portion of the GED, taking the writing skills test first might help, eliminating the source of greatest anxiety immediately. And, since the score may not be known for up to a week, the student can proceed with peace of mind to other portions of the test. The danger here is that if the student doesn't feel that the essay is well done, even without knowing the score, it may compromise his/her performance on subsequent tests. You can judge the timing, as you'll know your students' personalities and capabilities.

Many students do not participate in preparation classes, but come in "off the street" to take the test. You can give them information about the test, as well as about how to take the test when you first meet with them. Prepare a handout with test-taking tips, give advice — bring writing implements, eat a protein meal before coming in — whatever you feel would be most helpful.

CASE STUDY

In this section you will find:

A first and second draft of an essay

A profile of the writer and a synopsis of how she revised the paper

DRAFT I:

Swallowing fluids or objects should be very dangerous to your child, because the stuff could poison your child or chock him. Cleaning products, petroleum products, pesticides, or medicines should be kept out of children reach. Small objects, or sharp objects, you should keep a sharp eye out for, or be careful in your buying of toys for your kids.

Having thing get into or rubbed into eyes could easily poke out eyes, or blind a child. Cleaning products, petroleum products, pesticides, and medicine could very easily blind a child. You should try and keep out of children reach. Sharp objects and crayons-pens could easily be fall apone and poke out an eye, you should keep an eye out for objects on the floor, or in toys that you buy.

Getting anything shoved up or inhaled throw the nose could kill your child. Cleaning products, petroleum products, pesticides, and medicine, could burn out a child nose, or kill him by the fumes. You should keep these things out of childrens reach. small objects, sharp objects, or croyons and pens could easily get shoved up your nose and Damage it very badley.

DRAFT II:

Can You Let This Happen To Your Child?

Brad was 1½ years old. His parents left hot water too close to the edge of the counter. Brad came up and wanted a drink of water and reached for the glass, the glass tipped and the burning water went all over his chest and right arm. He had 1st and 2nd degree burns over 20% of his body. I know because I am Brad's mother, and I would like to prevent this from happening to your child.

Some of the hazards you encounter most are right in your own home. You should always be careful of children swallowing things, or putting things in their nose or eyes, also keep an eye out for falling down, and getting burned by little things you forget to do. So try and remember what you should look out for and how to prevent it from happening.

Swallowing fluids or objects could be very dangerous to your child, because the stuff could poison your child or choke him/her. Cleaning products, petroleum products, pesticides, or medicines should be kept out of childrens reach. Small objects, or sharp objects, could cut your childs throat, you should keep a sharp eye out for, or be careful in your buying of toys for your child.

Having something get into or rubbed into eyes could easily poke out eyes, or blind a child. Cleaning products, petroleum products, pesticides, and medicine could very easily blind a child. You should try and keep out of childrens reach. Sharp objects, crayons, and pens could easily be fallen on and poke out an eye, you should keep an eye out for objects on the floor, or in the toys you but for the child.

Getting anything shoved up or inhaled through the nose could kill your child, cleaning products, petroleum products, pesticides, and medicine, could burn out a child nose, or kill him by the fumes. You should keep these things out of childrens reach. Small objects, sharp objects, or crayons and pens could easily get shoved up your nose and damage it very badley.

Children are very uncoordinated and can fall down and break bones, cause cuts, and causes serouse head injury. Glass, sharp objects, toys, pens, and crayons could easily be shoved into the body if the child fell on them and cause them to bleed to death. Table corners, slipping on something left on the floor, stairs, and beds could cause bad head injury, or break bones very easily. You should always keep a sharp eye out for loose carpets, toys and objects left out.

Children can get burned very easily and quickly, and the scars could last a lifetime and the pain is incredible. Petroleum products, and matches should be kept out of childrens reach, because kids are very curious and could start a fire easily. Hot water and stoves of any kind would burn a child if he/she put his/her hand on it or fall on it, or play with it. You should try and teach them not to touch the stuff, but keep a careful eye on a child who is near a stove or hot water.

A child skin is very sensitive to things that might not bother us. Cleaning products, petroleum products, and medicine should be kept out of a child's reach, it could easily cause burning, itching, or tearing of the skin and cause children to die or become more susceptible to infection, or desease through the skin.

As a parent to a child who has been hurt I know what you would go through if this happen to your child. Brad is o.k. he only has a scar left because we got him to the hospital in time. But I would hate to have to go through the torment of having your child in agony and you can't do anything about it, and you can't take the pain away. You will have to live with all the guilt feeling I had even though it was an accident. So please be careful.

CASE STUDY

The writer is a young woman in her early 20's, married, mother of a 2½ year old boy and expecting her second child. She dropped out of high school in her junior year and decided to return to school for two reasons — she wanted to get a better-paying job than she could get without a diploma; and she didn't want her son to be embarrassed because his mother hadn't completed her education.

She was in an Intermediate/Advanced Writing class which required five papers of various types over 15 weeks. At the outset, Ms. B, I'll call her, had a very poor self-image. She wondered why she had been advised to take the class, and felt that it was way too hard for her; she felt she couldn't do the work. Without knowing anything about her classmates, she felt intimidated by them all. Writing a few short sentences was a major triumph for her.

Sample I is a first draft in response to an assignment to write a three-page paper about something that the students were very concerned about. It could be personal, political, about themselves or others. But, they had to care about the topic.

The first draft is a simple listing of hazards in the home, written in sentences of similar structure. The teacher's question is — what do you do about that? Well, the writing conference went something like this:

Teacher: Mrs. B, how do you feel about this paper?

Ms. B: It isn't good. I'm not a good writer.

T: Name 3 things that you like about this paper.

Ms. B: (after a long silence) Well, I finished it. It's pretty long. I used lots of examples.

T: Okay. Good. Now, why did you write about this topic?

Ms. B: Well, it's an awful story. My son Brad was 1½ when he pulled hot water on himself and he was burned badly. Now I always tell parents about being careful about their child's safety, since that happened.

T: Do I, as your reader, know anything about that?

Ms. B: (quite animated now) No — hey! That would make it really interesting, wouldn't it? But, I could never write three pages.

And so was born draft 2, which is characterized by a very personal touch — we can feel her mother pain. And through her listing of hazards, she sprinkles in other types of information: "children are curious", "children are very uncoordinated". We know that she's a mother; we know that she cares about children. The opening and closing paragraphs are very well done. Her use of conventions of standard written English is controlled better here, though there are errors. She still has revising to do, but Ms. B made tremendous gains in her writing by recognizing two fundamental questions: Who am I and why is this important to me? and Who is my audience, and why do I want them to know this?

APPENDIX I

LIST OF SUGGESTED WRITING TOPICS

APPENDIX I

SUGGESTED WRITING TOPICS

A. Incomplete sentences:

1. I think television is . . .
2. The most valued I felt was . . .
3. My life is important because . . .
4. My wildest fantasy is . . .
5. Sometimes I wish I . . .
6. When I'm driving, I really get annoyed when . . .
7. I really like people who . . .
8. When I get my GED, I . . .
9. I love/hate winter because . . .
10. When I'm down in the dumps, I . . .

B. Quotations:

11. "If you write about the things and the people you know best, you discover your roots. Even if they are new roots, fresh roots . . . they are better than . . . no roots." — Isaac Bashevis Singer
12. "The surest way to prevent war is not to fear it." — John Randolph
13. "I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest." — John Keats
14. "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." — Fanny Fern (Sarah Payson Parton)
15. "A good book is the best of friends." — Martin Farquhar Tupper
16. "Next to the very young, I suppose the very old are the most selfish." — William Makepeace Thackeray
17. "Bravery never goes out of fashion." — Thackeray (written in 1860)
18. "It's a long lane that knows no turnings." — Robert Browning
19. "I wish I loved the human race;
    I wish I loved its silly face;
    I wish I liked the way it walks;
    I wish I liked the way it talks;
    When I was introduced to one;
    I wish I thought, 'What jolly fun!' " — Sir Walter Raleigh
20. "I wonder what Adam and Eve think of it by this time." — Marianne Moore

C. Controversial Statements:

21. Tests are unfair.
22. Television is the greatest thing about living in the 1980s.
23. People who can't take care of themselves should live in nursing homes.
24. I hate cats.
25. Cigarette advertising should be banned.
26. A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.
27. Americans should buy American-made products.
28. Everyone should learn to speak another language.
29. The death penalty should be legalized in every state.
30. The war on drugs should be our government's top priority.

D. Questions:

31. Why did you go back to school?
32. What is your ideal job?
33. Who are your heroes? Why?
34. Should television newscasters be entertainers or news reporters?
35. When did you feel you were at your best?
36. What do you need to be completely happy?
37. What was your greatest adventure?
38. What do you think is Maine's/America's greatest problem?
39. If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be?
40. How do you spend your days off?

E. Essay Preparation Questions:

41. Compare living in the country to living in the city.
42. Discuss the advantages or disadvantages of being a parent.
43. Compare the contrast reading and watching television.
44. Explain why you like/dislike televised sports/soap operas/cartoons.
45. Describe the difficulties in awarding custody of children in a divorce settlement.
46. Illustrate how you go about answering an essay question.
47. Select a legal drinking age and support your choice.
48. Discuss the issues of job safety in your workplace.
49. Describe the quality of the environment in your town.
50. Explain the reasons for having a returnable bottle bill.

Many of these same topics can be written differently to exercise other thinking skills. You can ask the student to describe a process, compare and contrast, explain, analyze cause and effect, or persuade using the same topic. For example:

How do you get to school?
Compare and contrast adult education with the type of school you used to attend.
Explain what you would like to get out of school this time.
Discuss what made you decide to return to school.
Write a letter to a friend who has dropped out of school, persuading him/her to return as you did.

Look to your students for ideas for writing projects. Ask that they keep a file of ideas that they discover as they work. These ideas may come from prewriting exercises, from reading, or grow out of the student's interest or curiosity. Keep a file yourself, and share your file with other teachers in your program. Offer a choice of two or three topics so that students write about something that interests them.

APPENDIX II

WRITING ANALYSIS SCORE SHEET

INDIVIDUAL WRITING PROFILE

GED STUDENTS WRITING RECORD SHEET

WRITING ANALYSIS – SCORE SHEET

Name _____

WRITING SAMPLE	DATE	HOLISTIC SCORE	MASTERY OF INDIVIDUAL SCORING CRITERIA					
			PURPOSE	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	SUPPORT	LANGUAGE	CSWE
INITIAL								
PRETEST								
GED TEST								

Prepared by: Lucinda Coombs
1987 Maine GED Writing Skills Test Essay Teacher Training Manual

INDIVIDUAL WRITING PROFILE

Student _____ Class _____

Teacher _____ Date _____

Analyzing the product

ENTRY LEVEL			PRE-TEST	
Yes	No	Criteria	Yes	No
		PURPOSE		
—	—	1. Does the writer understand the directions?	—	—
—	—	2. Does the writer identify a purpose?	—	—
—	—	3. Does the writer identify an audience?	—	—
—	—	4. Does the writer clearly identify a focus?	—	—
—	—	5. Has the writer composed a strong opening paragraph?	—	—
		CONTENT		
—	—	1. Does the writer clearly state a thesis?	—	—
—	—	2. Does the writer include several substantive ideas to support the thesis?	—	—
—	—	3. Does the writer relate the ideas to the focus?	—	—
—	—	4. Does the writer develop a distinct point of view?	—	—
		ORGANIZATION		
—	—	1. Does the writer arrange the material logically?	—	—
—	—	2. Is the organizational pattern apparent?	—	—
—	—	3. Does the writing move smoothly from one paragraph to another?	—	—
—	—	4. Are the paragraphs well-constructed — unified and complete?	—	—
		SUPPORT		
—	—	1. Does the writer use specific detail?	—	—
—	—	2. Does the writer use relevant detail?	—	—
—	—	3. Does the writer thoroughly develop the main idea?	—	—
		LANGUAGE		
—	—	1. Does the writer write clearly?	—	—
—	—	2. Does the writer write concisely?	—	—
—	—	3. Does the writer use precise words?	—	—
—	—	4. Does the writer avoid using unnecessary words?	—	—
—	—	5. Is the language easy to read?	—	—
		CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH		
—	—	1. Does the writer avoid errors?	—	—
—	—	2. Are the sentences well constructed?	—	—
—	—	3. Does the writer spell well?	—	—
—	—	4. Does the writer punctuate correctly?	—	—
—	—	5. Does the writer capitalize correctly?	—	—

GED STUDENTS WRITING RECORD SHEET

Date _____

Teacher _____

Names of students

DETAILED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA check off if the student needs to work in that area								
PURPOSE —understands directions —recognizes purpose —recognizes audience —clearly identifies focus —writes strong opening paragraph								
CONTENT —clearly states thesis —includes several substantive ideas —relates ideas to focused topic —develops point of view								
ORGANIZATION —arranges material logically —makes organizational pattern apparent —moves smoothly from one paragraph to another —constructs unified and complete paragraphs								
SUPPORT —uses specific detail —uses relevant detail —thoroughly develops main ideas								

	Names of students							
LANGUAGE —writes clearly —writes concisely —uses precise words —minimizes unnecessary words —uses language that is easy to read								
CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH —makes minimum of errors —constructs good sentences —spells well —punctuates correctly —capitalizes correctly								

Prepared by: Lucinda Coombs
1987 Maine GED Writing Skills Test Essay Teacher Training Manual

APPENDIX III

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REFERENCES
IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

ADULT EDUCATION/GED

EVALUATION

PEER RESPONSE

WRITING PROCESS

RESEARCH

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

TEXTS/WORKBOOKS

FOCUSED ON FORM

REFERENCES

OTHER SOURCES

APPENDIX III

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADULT EDUCATION/GED

American Council on Education; *The 1988 Tests of General Educational Development: A Preview;* Washington, D.C., 1985.

A description of changes in the GED, with a section on holistic scoring and some samples of writing.

Baum, Myra; *The Cambridge Program for the GED Writing Sample;* Cambridge; NY; 1986.

An exercise book based on the writing sample. Includes writing assignments.

Beers, James W. and J. Thomas Gill, Jr.; *GED Writing Sample;* Steck-Vaughn Company; Austin, Texas; 1987.

A student guide to the GED writing sample, with instruction in constructing an essay. Exercises and suggested writing topics.

Cambridge; *Tips for Teachers;* NY; 1986.

For use with The Cambridge Program for the New York State GED Writing Sample. Suggestions for using the Program as both an instructional vehicle and an exercise book.

Jones, Lois B. and Jane L. Evanson; *The Write Stuff Series;* Contemporary Books, Inc.; Chicago, 1985.

The series includes five books: *Writing for a Purpose; Putting it in Paragraphs; Shaping Sentences; Life Skills Writing Exercise Book;* and *Test and Essay Writing Exercise Book.* Written in response to the interest generated by the 1988 GED test. A step-by-step approach to teaching writing. Easy to use, complete. Can be used by students or by teachers to target writing needs. Teacher's manual available.

Perl, Sondra; "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers"; Research in the Teaching of English; 13; Dec. 1979; pages 317-336.

Perl describes her work with five unskilled adult writers. She identifies characteristics of writing processes of unskilled writers — specifically adult writers. Much of the article is a case study in which Perl analyzes a student's writing and follows up with "Implications for Teaching".

Reid, Patricia (Project Editor); *Contemporary's GED Staff Development Video-tape Series: The New GED Tests Overview Viewer's Guide;* Contemporary Books, Inc.; Chicago, 1987.

A thorough description of the 1988 test and a comparison with the present test. Some suggestions for presenting material and developing skills in all test areas. Designed to teach GED teachers. It would be particularly helpful for the inexperienced.

Scott, Foresman and Company; *Teaching Adults to Write: A Brief Guide for the Teacher of Writing;* Glenview, Ill., 1986.

Some suggestions for classroom activities that teachers might find useful. Long list of writing topics. Does not extend far beyond the scope of this manual. A major criticism is its suggestion that students write good sentences and paragraphs before moving on to longer pieces.

EVALUATION

Beach, Richard; "Demonstrating Techniques for Assessing Writing in the Writing Conference"; *College Composition and Communication;* Vol. 37, No. 1; February, 1986; pages 56-65.

Beach discusses a wide range of methods teachers can use to shift the responsibility for evaluating writing from the teacher to the student. He offers questions for the teacher, and some solutions to problems of students unable to assess their own work.

Bloom, Lynn Z.; *Fact and Artifact: Writing Non-fiction;* Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers; NY, 1985.
Presents samples of student writing, with annotated revisions and suggestions for how to write about different topics (how to respond to the subject). Each lesson contains related sample writing, a bibliography and a checklist. The content must be adapted for work with adults, but it is worthwhile in this case.

Cooper, Charles R. and Lee Odell; *Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging;* National Council of Teachers of English; Urbana, IL, 1977.
"A comprehensive summary of the best current information on describing writing and measuring growth in writing." (From page vii of the Introduction). Of particular interest are pages 135-156, "Individualized Goal Setting, Self-Evaluation, and Peer Evaluation" by Mary Beaven.

Irmscher, William F.; *Teaching Expository Writing;* Holt, Rinehart and Winston; NY, 1979.
Irmscher discusses common statements made about writing, teaching and learning writing and what it takes to be a writer and/or a teacher of writing. Each chapter ends with suggestions for teaching different features of, writing. A good section on evaluation, making comments that improve the writing rather than undermine the confidence of the writer. Some references.

Sister M. Judine, IHM; *A Guide for Evaluating Student Composition;* NCTE; Urbana, IL, 1965.
Written for high school teachers of English. A good display of helpful and non-helpful comments about a ninth grader's essay. A heavy emphasis on surface errors, but two sections are especially useful: pages 48-60, on guided theme reading and pages 97-112, an analysis of comments.

Lindemann, Erika; *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers;* Oxford University Press; NY, 1982.
Contains practical advice for composition teachers at all levels. Of particular utility are: "Diagnosing Writing Problems" and "Responding to Student Writing" pages 217-235. Extensive bibliography.

Tate, Gary and Edward P. J. Corbett; *Teaching High School Composition;* Oxford University Press; NY, 1970.
Collection of essays that are readable, sensible, and easily applied to the classroom. Of special interest: Macrorie on writing to be read, page 96; Larson's checklist of details to consider when evaluating papers, page 26; and Larson's section on assignments. Bibliographies.

White, Edward M.; *Teaching and Assessing Writing;* Jossey-Bass; San Francisco, CA; 1985.
Has wide application in education. Examines the issues and problems that underlie the teaching and assessing of writing. Presents solutions to those problems, and ways to manage the issues and their solutions in the classroom. Assessment section focuses heavily on mass testing of writing ability, but does discuss holistic scoring, its limitations and values. Bibliography.

PEER RESPONSE

Elbow, Peter; *Writing Without Teachers;* Oxford University Press; NY, 1981.
Based on the idea that writing is not so much taught as it is learned. Elbow discusses ways to foster independence in writers and offers practical suggestions to both teachers and students. Especially helpful for blocked writers and for teachers who wish to use response groups.

Grimm, Nancy; "Improving Student's Responses to their Peers' Essays"; Staffroom Interchange, *College Composition and Communication;* Vol. 37, No. 1, February 1986, pages 91-94.
Good solid suggestions to guide teachers using peer response groups. Grimm offers several ways to train students as critics to ensure the desired outcome.

Moberg, Goran "George"; *Writing in Groups: New Techniques for Good Writing Without Drills;* The Writing Consultant; NY, 1983. 2nd Expanded Edition.

This workbook can be used by groups or by independent writers. Focuses on collaborative learning and the the writing process. Includes list of writing topics, response forms that are suitable for photocopying and practical writing exercises to take students through the writing process. Teacher's manual available.

WRITING PROCESS

Brannon, Lil, Melinda Knight and Vara Neverow-Turk; *Writers Writing;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.; Upper Montclair, NJ, 1982.

Lighthearted and personal discussion of writing as a process, sprinkled with Sandra Boynton's cats. Written for college writing teachers, this book offers a lot to adult educators. Excerpts by professional and student writers; chapters on writing and reading with a special section for teachers.

Daniels, Harvey, and Steven Zemelman; *A Writing Project: Training Teachers of Composition from Kindergarten to College;* Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.; Portsmouth, NH, 1985.

Based on the Illinois Writing Project, the book is a step by step list of activities for training writing teachers. The bulk of the book outlines the training program and there is a lot of teacher writing and sharing. The assumptions section is good.

Elbow, Peter; *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process;* Oxford University Press; NY, 1981.

The message of this book is that everyone can achieve mastery in writing by gaining power over the act of writing and the intimidation it often causes. Practical suggestions for anyone needing to write. A broad range of techniques to help writers through the process.

Elbow, Peter; *Writing Without Teachers.* (See earlier entry)

Emig, Janet; *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders;* NCTE Urbana, IL, 1971.

A pioneer in writing process research, Emig examines how high school seniors compose. Of particular interest to adult educators are Chapters 4 and 5, analyses of eight writers; Chapter 6, Findings; and Appendix A, Writing Autobiography. The value is acquainting teachers with the writing habits of students — when and how they make choices in their writing. Bibliography.

Emig, Janet; *The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning and Thinking;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc. 1983.

A collection of essays and papers written by Emig between 1963 and 1982. The chapters are interspersed with excerpts of interviews between the editors and Emig, and are followed by a list of readings.

Graves, Donald; *A Researcher Learns to Write;* Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.; Exeter, NH, 1984.

A collection of the author's previously published articles on writing, each prefaced by a description of how the articles came to be written. Arranged in chronological order, the articles illustrate Graves' struggles as a writer and trace the changes in his view of writing over a period of about 10 years.

Graves, Donald H.; *Balance the Basics: Let Them Write;* Ford Foundation; NY; February, 1978.

A discussion of the importance of writing and why it should be taught. Describes the "process-conference approach". Though the target population of this project was elementary and junior high school students, the methods are easily applied to adult education. Some references.

Horton, Susan R.; *Thinking Through Writing;* The Johns Hopkins University Press; Baltimore, MD, 1982.

For GED teachers: Chapter 2 "What is an Essay Anyway?". Includes activities to identify strengths in writing and how our minds work to find out what kinds of writers we are or can become. Helps teachers focus on the task and identify important issues. A "basics" focus — not writing basics, but thinking basics. Chapters 1-12.

Lewis, Stephen C. and M. Cecile Forte; *Discovering Process: Meaning and Form in Reading and Writing;* MacMillan Publishing Co.; NY, 1985.

The writing process as a way of shifting from the writer's needs to the reader's needs. A section on patterns of development. The authors argue that clear reading and writing are based on critical thinking ability.

Moberg, Goran "George"; *Writing in Groups* (See earlier entry)

Murray, Donald; *A Writer Teaches Writing;* 2nd Ed.; Houghton Mifflin Co.; Boston, MA 1985.

If you teach writing, read this book. Murray articulates the interrelationship of teacher and writer and offers suggestions to maximize writers' performance, helping teachers identify what works for them and for their students. A "must read." Bibliography.

Murray, Donald; *Learning by Teaching: Selected Articles in Writing and Teaching;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.; Upper Montclair, NJ, 1982.

A collection of Murray's essays written and previously published over a period of fourteen years. Two sections: the writing process and the teaching of writing. There's not much more to say about Murray except "Read his stuff."

RESEARCH

See Graves and Emig, earlier entries.

Mosenthal, Peter, Lynne Tamor and Sean A. Walmsley (eds.); *Research on Writing: Principles and Methods;* Longman, Inc.; NY, 1983.

Based on discussions at the Conference on Writing Research held at SUNY-Albany, May 1980. Good reference for those interested in examining the research in teaching writing.

Stock, Patricia L.; *FForum: Essays on Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Upper Montclair, NJ; 1983.

A collection of essays published in fforum — the newsletter of the English Composition Board of Michigan. Three sections: writing as a measure of literacy; writing as compared with speaking, listening and reading; and writing as a learning and communication tool. Interdisciplinary focus. Some discussion of assessment, including holistic scoring.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Bunge, Nancy L.; *Finding the Words: Conversations with Writers who Teach;* Swallow Press/Ohio University Press; Athens, OH, 1985.

Interviews with 16 writers who teach or have taught at colleges and universities. No sure-cures, but some stimulating discussion about honesty in writing. Bibliographies.

Deen, Rosemary and Marie Ponsot; *The Common Sense: What to Write, How to Write It and Why;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.; Upper Montclair, NJ, 1985.

For writers of all ages — four expository writing courses which focus on different kinds of expository writing. Designs for two of those are in the Appendix.

Elbow, Peter; *Writing With Power* and *Writing Without Teachers* (see earlier entries).

Flower, Linda; *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing;* (2nd ed.) Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; NY, 1985.

Can be easily adapted for use with GED students. Flower examines common obstacles for writers and suggests ways to overcome them. Activities and examples to help students analyze their own writing and resolve the problems. References. Instructor's manual available.

Gere, Anne Ruggles; *Writing and Learning;* Macmillan Publishing Co.; NY, 1985.

Written for college students, but is readable and practical. GED teachers can use some of the ideas, lists, and questions.

Hoover, Regina, M.; *Make Your Writing Count — From Free Writing to Structured Composition;* (2nd ed.); CBS College Publishing; 1982.

Sequenced writing strategies from freewriting and personal prose to the more formal writing of essays and research papers. A course outline that is designed to be used sequentially, but GED teachers will find useful activities to help students. Good explanations for teachers, clarifying writing teacher jargon and offering practical ways to implement what we are learning about writing. Includes a section of "mini-grammars" beginning with a diagnostic exercise followed by a lesson about a point of grammar. Good way to individualize instruction of grammar. Not a workbook, but students may be able to work alone with this.

Irmscher, William F.; *Teaching Expository Writing* (see earlier entry).

Koch, Carl and James M. Brazil; *Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process;* NCTE; Urbana, IL; 1978.

An excellent resource. Exercises to use in the classroom at different points in the writing process. "Practical, involving, student-centered, simply implemented" (p. ix). Two appendices on evaluation.

Maxwell, Martha; *Improving Student Learning Skills;* Jossey-Bass Publishers; San Francisco, CA, 1980.

See "Difficult Tutoring Situations", Appendix C, in which Maxwell illustrates difficult tutoring sessions and suggests ways to ease the difficulty.

Murray, Donald; *Learning by Teaching* (see earlier entry).

Schwartz, Mimi; *Writing for Many Roles;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.; Upper Montclair, NJ; 1985.

Of special interest: Chapter 1 on journal writing; pages 62-128 on writing and revising essays. Easy to read, practical and useful for GED teachers.

Ziegler, Alan; *The Writing Workshop, Vol. 1;* Teachers and Writers Collaborative; NY, 1981.

A how-to for teachers who want to establish and manage a writing workshop. Its major limitation is the number of examples from elementary schools.

TEXT/WORKBOOKS

Berbrich, Joan D.; *Writing About People and Yourself;* Amsco School Publications, Inc.; NY, 1979.

A good vocabulary booster. A lot of short response exercises that help students see the essentials of writing — audience, point of view, etc. Its best use is in response to a particular problem, not as a single writing text.

Levy, Wilbert J.; *Paragraph Play;* Amsco School Publications, Inc.; NY, 1985.

Teaches four paragraph structures that GED students can use in the essay. A step-by-step approach, limited to developing good paragraphs — focused, coherent and unified. A review of mechanics and sentence connections. Particularly well-suited to students who need basic instruction in paragraph building, who may have never been taught the elements of structure.

Rubin, Betsy; *Edge on English: All Spelled Out;* Volumes A-D; Contemporary Books, Inc.; Chicago, 1986.

Lessons and exercises in workbook format. Books A and B teach regular sound patterns and rules of spelling. Books C and D are based on commonly misspelled words. Designed for ABE and GED students.

FOCUSED ON FORM

Deen, Rosemary, and Marie Ponsot; *The Common Sense*. (see earlier entry)

Horton, Susan R.; *Thinking Through Writing* (see earlier entry)

Rainer, Tristine; *The New Diary: How to Use a Journal for Self-Guidance and Expanded Creativity;* J. P. Tarcher, Inc.; L.A., 1978.

A valuable resource if you assign journal-writing or keep a journal yourself. Rainer excerpts diaries of the famous and not so famous, illustrating what she has learned about the values of journal-writing as a tool for self-discovery. Chapter 4 presents eleven devices for writing a journal and illustrates the rewards of keeping one, including unlocking joys and fantasies, memories and conflicts, and overcoming writing blocks. Of special importance is the message that writing is an essential part of life. Extensive bibliography.

Schwartz, Mimi; *Writing for Many Roles*. (see earlier entry)

REFERENCES

page 7. Hammond, Dorothy and Joseph Mangano; *Teaching Writing to Adults: An Inservice Education Manual;* Two Year College Development Center, SUNY, Albany; June, 1986. page 3

page 14. Hammond and Mangano, page 54

page 17. Schor, Sandra and Judith Fishman; *Random House Guide to Writing, Teacher's Edition;* Random House, NY; 1981; 2nd edition. pages 125-127

page 35. Definitions of "essay" taken from:
—Holman, C. Hugh; *A Handbook of Literature;* Bobbs-Merrill Publishing, Indianapolis, IN; 1980; 4th edition. page 169
—Schor and Fishman. page 48
—Horton, Susan; *Thinking Through Writing;* Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD; 1982. page 37

page 35. Gere, Anne Ruggles; *Writing and Learning;* MacMillan Publishing Co., NY; 1985. page 124

page 36. Esaay writing guide adapted from: Schwartz, Mimi; *Writing for Many Roles;* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Upper Montclair, NJ; 1985. pages 101-103

page 39. Lindemann, Erika; *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers;* Oxford University Press, NY; 1982. pages 224-225

page 41. Moberg, Goran "George"; *Writing in Groups: New Techniques for Good Writing Without Drills;* The Writing Consultant, NY; 2nd expanded edition; 1983. pages 61-62

pages 42-44. Steve Bunnell, Bates College Writing Workshop

page 44. PQP Outline from Hammond and Mangano. page 46

page 47. Step by step guide to rating papers adapted from Hammond and Mangano. page 9

page 48. Holistic scoring criteria chart from Hammond and Mangano. page 11

page 52. QAD method from Hammond and Mangano. page 57

OTHER SOURCES

Generally, the books published by NCTE (The National Council of Teachers of English) are good, practical, and fairly inexpensive. You can get a catalog from them by writing:

NCTE
1111 Kenyon Rd.
Urbana, Ill. 61801